

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



*2004 Update*

# *City of Harrisonburg, Virginia*

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## Comprehensive Plan 2004 Update

*The City of Harrisonburg expresses appreciation to the members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee who have dedicated countless hours to the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan.*

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## **Chapter 1                      Introduction**

The City of Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan presents a vision of what kind of community the city would like to be in the future and identifies the steps required to move toward that vision. The plan provides information about the city's current conditions, long-term goals and objectives, and recommended implementation strategies. It addresses a wide range of issues, including land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, the preservation of historic and natural resources, and economic development.

As a long-term guide for the community, the Plan helps city leaders make decisions about the location, scale, and quality of new development; the improvement of neighborhoods and commercial areas; the revitalization of downtown and surrounding historic areas; the extension and upgrade of roads and utilities; and the future of the city's parks, public spaces, and natural areas.

Known as the "City with the Planned Future," Harrisonburg has a long tradition of public planning, and this plan builds on previous comprehensive plans adopted by the city, particularly the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and its 1998 Update. This plan is adopted to set the city's growth and development policies for the next five years within a long-term planning horizon of twenty years. Because the city is rapidly changing, as is the rest of the state, nation and world, the City Council expects to consider revisions to the plan, particularly at its next review in five years. In the meantime, this plan is meant to set the city on a course toward meeting its long-term vision as articulated in detail in Chapter 2.

### **Value and Importance of a Comprehensive Plan**

The comprehensive plan is one of the most essential documents produced by a local government. So essential is it that the Commonwealth of Virginia requires, in Section 15.2-2223 of the State Code, that every community prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan to guide its future growth and development. This plan must be kept up to date; state law requires the planning commission to review the plan at least once every five years.

The plan is important because it is both comprehensive and it is long term. It helps to coordinate most city activities by examining them all together at one time - a comprehensive approach. In this way, transportation is coordinated with decisions on new development, which in turn can be accommodated by planned improvements to water and sewer service. At the same time valued historic and natural resources are known and considered. Adopting and publishing a plan advertises city desires to others, allowing the public and the state and federal governments to know the city's development policies. A long-term view is necessary, so that short-term solutions to respond to a crisis do not preclude the city from reaching its long-term goals.

### **The Plan as a Guide**

It is important for citizens to realize that while the plan is important, it is only a guide. It is not a regulating document. It is not the law. Rather, it is a policy document used by the Planning Commission and City Council to guide decisions about such issues as rezoning proposals, the

location of new roads, investments in water and sewer improvements, and the development of parks. The plan is implemented by the city through the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances, the Design and Construction Standards Manual, the City Code, the Capital Improvements Program, and the annual budget.

## **A Community-Based Comprehensive Plan**

The effort to prepare this plan focused on reaching out and engaging the public in formulating its policies for the future. To ensure that the plan addressed the broadest range of community interests, the city sponsored an intensive and multifaceted planning process to raise awareness and understanding of planning issues and to encourage people to share their ideas and concerns. The process included the following:

### Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)

To guide the planning effort, the Planning Commission appointed a 15-member advisory committee comprised of all members of the Planning Commission, two members of City Council, a representative from the School Board, and six citizens. All five voting precincts, Keister, Simms, Spotswood, Stone Spring and Waterman, were represented. The CPAC worked with City staff and a team of planning consultants to review technical information, explore issues and ideas, engage the public in open input forums, and provide guidance on the plan's recommendations. Based on input from the public, the CPAC guided preparation of the vision statement, contributed goals, objectives and strategies, and set priorities for the implementation of the plan.

### Community Input Sessions: Round One

The CPAC held four open community input sessions in February and March 2003 to solicit ideas and issues that should be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan. Extensive efforts were made to notify the public of these meetings through newspaper advertisements, posters and flyers. Members of the growing Hispanic community were encouraged to participate through articles in the Spanish newspaper and the availability of translators at all input meetings.

These sessions occurred early in the planning process and were designed to allow the public to put forth their ideas before any plan text was written or planning maps created. About 70 citizens participated and provided a wealth of ideas, all of which are described in a summary memo included in the Plan Background Information Supplement (See below.) These ideas provided the seeds for the development of this plan's vision statement, goals, objectives, and strategies – the official policies of the plan.

### Community Input Sessions: Round Two

The CPAC worked diligently over the spring and summer to develop a draft vision statement, goals, and objectives for the plan, as well as draft versions of the Plan Framework Map (Chapter 4), Land Use Guide (Chapter 5), and Master Transportation Plan (Chapter 11). In a second round of community input sessions in September 2003, CPAC members and the consultant team

presented these drafts for public comment. About 50 members of the public attended four meetings.

The CPAC obtained many good comments from the attendees and used them to revise the drafts. The complete summary of the results of these meetings is also included in Plan Background Information Supplement (See below.)

### Final Community Input Opportunities for this Plan

This draft plan will be open to further public comment and input at public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council to be held in early 2004.

### **Plan Background Information Supplement**

In the course of preparing this plan, the CPAC, city staff and consultant team developed a great deal of technical information about city's current conditions. Detailed memos were prepared covering the following topics:

- Demographics, Housing and Land Use
- Analysis of the 1991 & 1998 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Water Supply, Wastewater Treatment, Storm Water Management and Solid Waste Management
- Economic Conditions
- Natural Resources and Environmental Issues
- Historic Resources

The detailed memos have been compiled into a Plan Background Information Supplement, which is included by reference into this plan. The supplement also includes the summaries of rounds one and two of the community input sessions. All the information in the supplement was used to develop this plan. Rather than clutter this plan document with the large amount of data presented in these memos, the data are instead summarized in the various chapters of the plan.

The Plan Background Information Supplement is available to members of the public who wish to review it in the offices of the City Department of Planning and Community Development.

### **Plan Organization**

This plan is organized for the convenience of both the general reader and those with questions about detailed recommendations in specific topic areas. For the general reader, the plan includes an Executive Summary, then this Introduction (Chapter 1) and a presentation of the City's Vision and Goals (Chapter 2). Following these opening chapters are the more detailed elements of the plan. Chapter 3 presents data on population and income to provide the Planning Context. Chapter 4 gives the overall framework for planning in Harrisonburg through an illustrative map and text. This Plan Framework Map illustrates the city's general pattern of development and



highlights areas where some degree of change is encouraged or anticipated. Following the Plan Framework are the chapters dealing with specific topic areas, referred to as “plan elements.” All the plan chapters are listed below:

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Vision & Goals
Chapter 3	Planning Context
Chapter 4	Plan Framework
Chapter 5	Land Use & Development Quality
Chapter 6	Neighborhoods & Housing
Chapter 7	Education, Arts & Culture
Chapter 8	Historic Resources
Chapter 9	Natural Resources
Chapter 10	Parks & Recreation
Chapter 11	Transportation
Chapter 12	Community Facilities, Services, Safety & Health
Chapter 13	Economic Development & Tourism
Chapter 14	Revitalization
Chapter 15	Community Engagement & Collaboration
Chapter 16	Implementation

The order in which the plan elements are presented does not imply any priority or order of importance. It is important for users of the plan to recognize that all the elements are interrelated.

Each element of the plan covered in Chapters 5 – 16 contains one or two long-term goals, the same goals as listed in Chapter 2, as well as more detailed objectives and strategies designed to implement the goals. The strategies are the most detailed recommendations of the plan and include specific projects, programs, initiatives, and investments that the city should undertake.

Although each individual strategy is important in achieving the vision, it is necessary to identify priorities and responsibilities for early implementation. Chapter 16, the final chapter, lists initial actions outlined in a five-year implementation program.

## **Chapter 2            Vision & Goals**

### **Introduction**

The preparation of the comprehensive plan provides an opportunity for the city to explore and articulate its vision for the future – what kind of city it would like to be in the next twenty years and beyond. This vision guides the development of the goals, objectives, and strategies for action that make up the policies of this plan. By implementing the goals, objectives and strategies, the city will move toward realizing its vision.

### **Vision Statement**

The City of Harrisonburg presents its vision for the future as follows:

*The City of Harrisonburg – where citizens are inspired to work together to create a great place to live, to raise a family, to learn, to work and to prosper.*

What is such a place? It is a city of safe and beautiful neighborhoods, where neighbors socialize and residents can walk safely down the street to worship, to play in the park, to go to school or even to shop or work. These are quiet, peaceful neighborhoods, beautiful in their architecture and landscaping. They offer many housing choices so each citizen has an opportunity to live in a decent home that they can afford and that is an asset to the neighborhood.

The City of Harrisonburg will be a great place to learn. It will offer excellent schools for our children to learn all they can to reach their full potential. Our great universities will be truly integrated into city life as centers of learning and culture offering opportunities to residents to experience and participate in the arts and to continue their educations.

This will be a city proud of its heritage, both cultural and natural, saving the best of its historic buildings and areas and preserving cherished green spaces. In our ideal city of the future, the air and the water in our streams will be cleaner in 2020 than they are today.

This will also be a city of efficient and effective service delivery. Clean, plentiful water will come from the tap and wastes will be handled efficiently, at low cost and in an environmentally sound manner. Transportation systems will work for citizens by offering many ways for people to get from here to there, and not just by car. The city will explore new technologies to assure the best, least costly services that conserve resources. Citizens will contribute to keeping the city working well by conserving water and energy and minimizing or recycling wastes.

Economic vitality will allow all to work and to prosper. The City of Harrisonburg will retain its place as the economic hub of the region through expansion of business opportunities. Such expansion may be achieved not only by new commercial and industrial development, but also by the revitalization of older and historic economic areas. A lively, revitalized downtown will play a central role in civic life. The commercial areas at city gateways will provide a good impression and welcome visitors and residents alike.

How will this great city be achieved? ...by engaging all its citizens to work toward the vision, by tapping into their skills and experience, and by engendering community spirit and pride.

### **Goals for Achieving the Vision**

The City of Harrisonburg sets the following goals for the next twenty years and beyond. These goals will inspire us to action - to devise the measures and policies necessary to make this city a great place to live, to raise a family, to learn, to work and to prosper.

- Goal 1. To improve the quality and compatibility of land use and development.
- Goal 2. To promote novel patterns of development like those developed early in the city's history – vital, well planned and well integrated mixed-housing and mixed-use urban areas of distinct character.
- Goal 3. To strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote the development of new neighborhoods that are quiet, safe, beautiful, walkable, enhance social interaction, and offer a balanced range of housing choices.
- Goal 4. To meet the current and future needs of residents for affordable housing.
- Goal 5. To provide a wide and equitably distributed range of educational and cultural opportunities for all ages.
- Goal 6. To celebrate the city's heritage and preserve and protect its historic resources as essential elements of the city's economic health, aesthetic character, and sense of place.
- Goal 7. To preserve and enhance the city's natural resources and encourage development that is compatible with nature.
- Goal 8. To meet the recreation needs of every citizen by providing comprehensive leisure opportunities and developing and maintaining a safe, well-distributed park and recreation system.
- Goal 9. To develop a safe and convenient transportation system serving all modes of travel, such as, automobile, pedestrian, bicycle and transit.
- Goal 10. To support a vital city with community facilities, infrastructure and services that are efficient, cost-effective and conserving of resources.
- Goal 11. To ensure the public safety and encourage the provision of excellent health services for all people.

- Goal 12. To retain and enhance the city's role as the economic and tourism hub of the region offering a variety of jobs in those sectors that enhance the city's ability to expand its economic base.
- Goal 13. To enhance and revitalize existing residential and commercial areas.
- Goal 14. To coordinate and collaborate with Rockingham County, Rockingham Memorial Hospital, James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University and others to meet these goals.
- Goal 15. To engage all citizens to work collaboratively in planning, developing, and promoting the city as a great place.
- Goal 16. To keep this plan vital and useful by regularly reviewing its recommendations and the progress toward meeting them.

## Chapter 3 Planning Context

### Introduction

Information on the characteristics of the city's population, population growth rate and income levels is essential in planning for future community needs such as schools, public utilities, recreation facilities, police protection, emergency services, human services and housing. This chapter updates and expands upon demographic data in previous plans, incorporating information from the April 2000 U. S. Census of Population and other population studies.

It is important to note that, in Harrisonburg, population characteristics are greatly affected by the presence of two institutions of higher learning – Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) and James Madison University (JMU). The large numbers of college-aged residents within the city skew some of the city's demographic characteristics, such as age distribution and personal income. Therefore, demographic comparisons with non-college communities are not very helpful. Some of the comparisons provided in this chapter focus instead on other college communities within this general region of Virginia.

### Analysis

#### Population Growth

In 1900, there were 3,521 people within the town of Harrisonburg. Over the next half-century the population increased slowly, but steadily. During the 1970s, the city experienced its first major modern surge of growth, with the population increasing by 34.7 percent to 19,671. This accelerated rate of growth coincided with a major increase in enrollment at JMU and continued through the 1980s, assisted by a major annexation in 1983 that added 11.4 square miles and an estimated 5,729 persons. During the 1980s, the city experienced its largest ten-year population increase, a substantial 56 percent, due mostly to the annexation. Growth continued during the 1990s, when the population increased by 31.8 percent, to a 2000 population of 40,468, according to the U.S. Census. Table 3-1 summarizes the city's historical growth pattern.

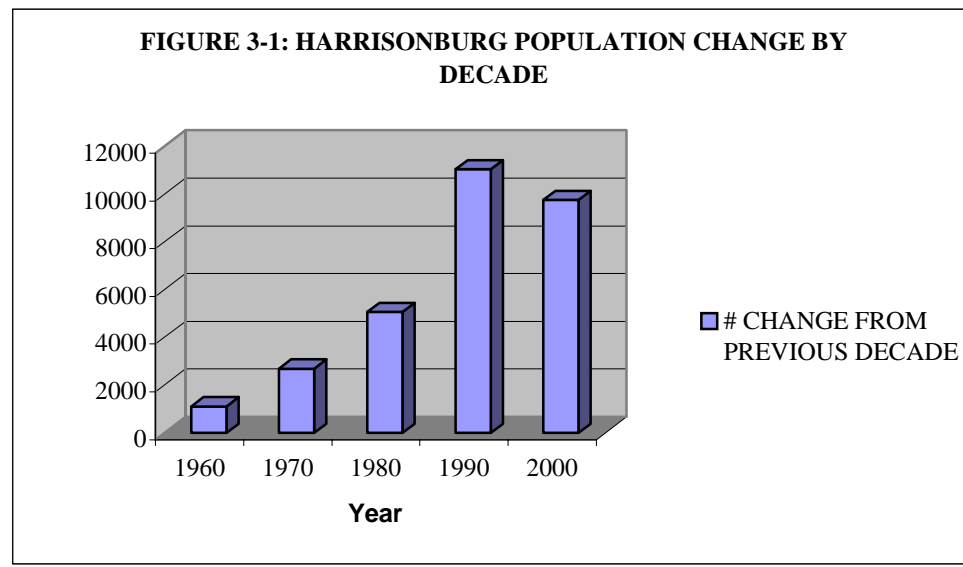
**Table 3-1. Harrisonburg Population Change, 1900-2000**

Year	Population	Number Change from Previous Decade	Percent Change from Previous Decade
1900	3,521		
1910	4,879	1,358	38.6%
1920	5,875	996	20.4%
-	---	---	---
1960	11,916	1106	10.2%
1970	14,605	2,689	22.6%
1980	19,671	5,066	34.7%
1990	30,707	11,036*	56.1%
2000	40,468	9,761	31.8%

Source: 1991 Comprehensive Plan; U.S. Census of Population

\*Includes 5,729 persons added as a result of a 1983 annexation

The numerical change in population over the past five decades is illustrated in the graph below.



### Components of Growth

Population growth within a community results from a combination of the population's natural increase (births minus deaths) and migration patterns (people entering and leaving the community). While the rate of natural increase is not generally affected by government policy, migration patterns can be influenced by housing and job opportunities within a community, which in turn are affected by local government land use, housing and economic development policies. In Harrisonburg's case, migration is also affected by the student, staff, and faculty growth of EMU and JMU. Table 3-2 illustrates trends in the components of city population growth during the past two decades confirming that migration of people into the city far outpaced the natural increase in the population during the past two decades.

**Table 3-2. Harrisonburg Components of Population Change, 1980-2000**

Decade	Change in Population (#)	Natural Increase (#)*	Natural Increase (%)	Migration (#)	Migration (%)
1980-1990	11,036**	678	6.1%	10,358**	93.9%
1980s without '83 annexation	5307	678	12.7	4,629	87.2
1990-2000	9,761	1,180	12.1	8,581	87.9

Sources: U.S. Census of Population; Virginia Department of Health, Center for Vital Statistics

\* Net of births minus deaths

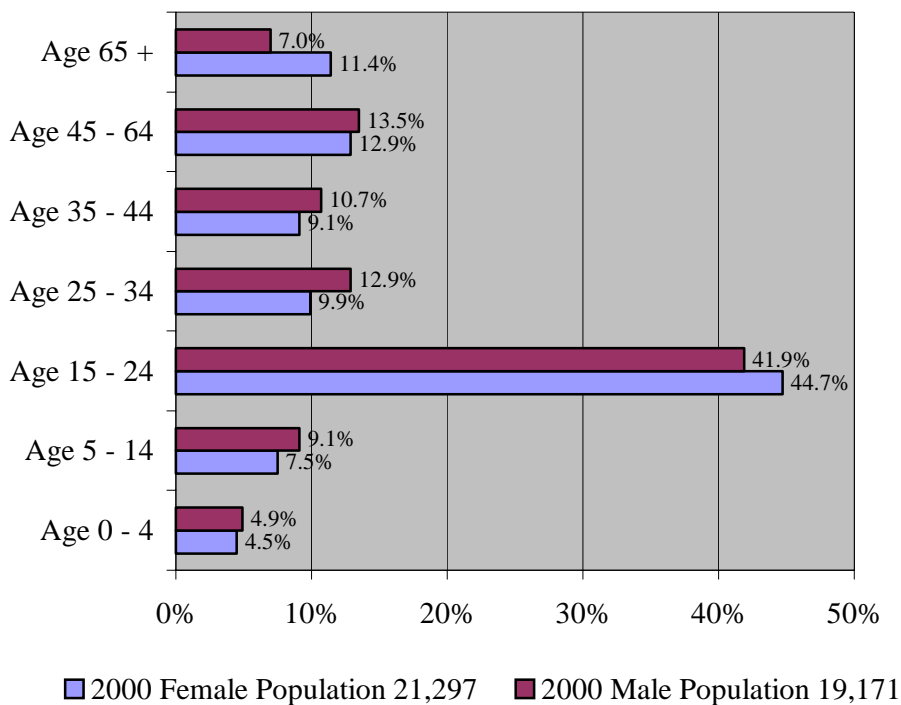
\*\* 1983 annexation added 5,729 persons to the city

## Population Characteristics

The U. S. Census collects information on a wide variety of population characteristics, such as age distribution, education, and income. Harrisonburg's population characteristics are greatly affected by the presence of two universities within the city limits.

The city's age structure is one of the most obvious population characteristics affected by the university populations. Figure 3-2 below breaks down the age group distribution by sex. Note the large percentage of the population in the 15-24 age group, which includes most college students. Harrisonburg's 2000 population included 21,297 females (52.6% of the total population) and 19,171 males (47.4%). There was a fairly even distribution of males and females throughout the different age groups, except in the 15-24 age group, where females outnumber males by about three percent. As of the fall of 2002, females still comprised 60% of the JMU student population.

**Figure 3-2: Harrisonburg Population by Age and Sex**



Harrisonburg's median age of 22.6 years according to the 2000 Census is young compared to that of Rockingham County and Virginia (at 37.5 and 35.7 years, respectively), but is similar to two other college towns, Charlottesville (25.6 years) and Lexington (23.3 years).

## Population Diversity

Harrisonburg, like most U.S. cities, is becoming more diverse as the country's overall diversity increases. During the past decade, immigrants from other countries have been drawn to the area in part by the labor needs of the poultry industry. Table 3-3 provides diversity statistics for Harrisonburg from the 1990 and 2000 U. S. Censuses of Population, and compares the 2000 statistics to Rockingham County and Virginia.

**Table 3-3. Diversity Characteristics for the Year 2000  
Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, and Virginia**

	<b>Harrisonburg</b>		<b>Harrisonburg</b>		<b>Rockingham County</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
<b>RACE*</b>	<b>1990 #</b>	<b>1990 %</b>	<b>2000 #</b>	<b>2000 %</b>	<b>2000 %</b>	<b>2000 %</b>
White	27,968	91%	35,241	87.1%	97.3%	73.9%
Black or African American	2,018	6.6	2,726	6.7	1.6	20.4
American Indian & Alaska Native	37	0.1	190	0.5	0.3	0.7
Asian	469**	1.5	1,652	4.1	0.4	4.3
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander			44	0.1	0	0.1
Some other race	215	0.7	1,725	4.3	1.2	2.7
<b>HISPANIC or LATINO of any race</b>	481	1.6	3,580	8.8%	3.3%	4.7%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population DP-1 (SF1)

\*Race alone or in combination with one or more other races listed. The race percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

\*\*The Asian and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander categories were combined in 1990.



As can be seen from Table 3-3, the population of the city and the surrounding area remains predominantly white, significantly more so than the Commonwealth as a whole. Harrisonburg's population, however, is more diverse than that of Rockingham County. The major difference between the city and Virginia is in the city's much lower percentage of Black / African American population, which has held fairly constant during the past decade.

In 2000, the Hispanic percentage of Harrisonburg's population was almost twice as high as that of the state and more than 2.5 times higher than the percentage of Hispanics in the county. The 3,580 persons of Hispanic origin represent 8.8% of the city's population. This is a significant increase in the city's Hispanic population over the past decade. The 1990 Census recorded 481 Hispanic persons – less than two percent of the total 1990 population.

The average household size for the Hispanic population, the city's largest ethnic group, is greater than the household size for the city as a whole – 3.81 persons per household for Hispanics vs. 2.53 for the overall city. These larger Hispanic households place a greater demand on the city's housing stock and public school system than the average Harrisonburg household. In contrast, the average household size for the city's largest racial minority, Black / African-Americans, at 2.59 person per household, is only slightly higher than the city average.

The 2000 Census indicated that Hispanics are not the only ethnic group well represented in the city. The Census collected information on the region/country of birth of the city's foreign-born population, as well as the different languages spoken in the city's households, which provide additional details on the city's diversity. According to the 2000 Census, Harrisonburg's foreign-born population numbered 3,733 persons in 2000. Over 82 percent of the city's foreign-born residents (3,067) in 2000 were not U.S. citizens.

Table 3-4 summarizes the place of birth of Harrisonburg's foreign-born residents. While almost 52 percent were from Latin America, another 27.1 percent were Asian and 9.1 percent were Eastern European. In fact, every populated continent is represented within the city's population.

The 2000 Census also noted how long foreign-born residents have been in this country. Approximately 46 percent of Harrisonburg's foreign-born residents entered the U.S. since 1995, another almost 25 percent entered between 1990-94, and 22 percent during the 1980s. Only seven percent have been in this country since before 1980.

**Table 3-4. Region/Country of Birth of Foreign-Born Population  
Harrisonburg, 2000**

<b>Region or Country</b>	<b>Number of Foreign-Born Residents</b>	<b>Percent of Foreign-Born Residents</b>	<b>Percent of Total Harrisonburg Population</b>
<b>North Europe</b> (U.K., Ireland, Sweden)	68	1.82%	0.17%
<b>Western Europe</b> (Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands)	42	1.12	0.10
<b>Southern Europe</b> (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain)	30	0.80	0.07
<b>Eastern Europe</b> Czech. Rep., Belarus, Yugoslavia – 74 Russia – 230 Ukraine – 30	340	9.12	0.84
<b>Asia</b> E. Asia – 300 S. Central Asia – 365 S.E. Asia – 273 W. Asia - 75	1,013	27.14	2.50
<b>Africa</b>	188	5.04	0.47
<b>Australia</b>	8	0.21	0.02
<b>Latin American</b> Caribbean – 100 Central America – 1,706 South America – 133	1,939	51.94	4.80
<b>Canada</b>	105	2.81	0.26
<b>TOTALS</b>	3,733	100%	9.23%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census of Population, Summary File 3

Recent data on English as a Second Language (ESL) enrollment from Harrisonburg City Public Schools indicates that 31 percent of all students in the city's six schools are enrolled in ESL programs, speaking 38 different languages representing 52 foreign countries. This ESL data from March 2003 is provided in Table 3-5 and lists a total of 1,229 ESL students in grades K-12 out of the total school enrollment of 3,997 students. Spotswood Elementary School has the largest percentage of ESL students of all city schools at 44% of its total enrollment, while the high school has the lowest percentage at 26%. Waterman Elementary has the lowest ESL percentage of all of the elementary schools at 27%. Harrisonburg City Public Schools has the highest proportion of ESL students of all localities in Virginia. The large numbers and percentage of ESL students throughout the school system presents major financial and operational challenges to the city's public school system.

**Table 3-5. ESL Enrollment – Harrisonburg Public Schools  
Number, Percentage & Total by School and Grade  
March 2003**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>KES</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>SSES</b>	<b>WES</b>	<b>THMS</b>	<b>HHS</b>	<b>ESL Enrollment</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>% ESL</b>
K	22	41	45	25			133	333	40%
1	26	47	38	14			125	324	39
2	36	33	36	23			128	332	39
3	19	27	33	23			102	291	35
4	20	23	33	17			93	300	31
5	32	23	24	14			93	316	29
6					82		82	290	28
7					94		94	324	29
8					76		76	303	25
9						104	104	367	28
10						99	99	313	32
11						65	65	276	24
12						35	35	228	15
ESL Enrollment	155	194	209	116	252	303	1,229		
School Enrollment	458	440	565	433	917	1,184		3,997	
% ESL	34%	44%	37%	27%	27%	26%			31%

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools, March 2003

KEY: KES = Keister Elementary School; SES = Spotswood Elementary School; SSES = Stone Spring Elementary School; WES = Waterman Elementary School; THMS = Thomas Harrison Middle School; HHS = Harrisonburg High School

### Income and Poverty

Income: Measures of personal and family income provide an indication of the general economic well being of the population. The latest Census Bureau statistics on income are provided in Table 3-6 and indicate Harrisonburg's median household, family, and per capita income for 1999. Statistics are also provided for comparison purposes for Rockingham County, Charlottesville, and Virginia. Charlottesville is included for comparison with another college town, since income statistics for such communities are affected by the large percentage of college-aged population, who typically earn lower wages because they are in school and not working full time.

**Table 3-6. 1999 Income for Households, Families and Individuals  
Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Charlottesville & Virginia**

	<b>Harrisonburg</b>	<b>Rockingham County</b>	<b>Charlottesville</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>				
<b>Total</b>	\$29,949	\$40,748	\$31,007	\$46,677
<b>Non-family Households</b>	\$19,204	21,872	\$21,431	29,642
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$45,159	46,262	45,110	54,169
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$14,898	18,795	16,973	23,975

Source: 2000 U.S. Census of Population, Summary File 3, DP-3, QT-P33

The Census Bureau defines a “household” as all persons who occupy a housing unit and a “family” as a household consisting of one or more persons who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A non-family household in Harrisonburg would include groups of college students living together in off-campus housing. Since many households consist of only one person, median household income is usually less than median family income. “Median” means that half of the households make more than this figure and half make less.

As can be seen from Table 3-6, Harrisonburg and Charlottesville have very similar income profiles. Both cities have lower incomes for non-family households and individuals (per capita) than the county or the state. Although there is no way to quantify the exact impact of student households on the city’s median non-family household income, the presence of low wage-earning student households must have a depressing effect on this median figure. Part of the lower income may also be attributed to the presence of lower income households drawn to an urban area for convenient access to services and lower-cost housing. Nevertheless, the two cities’ families show income levels comparable to that in the county and the Commonwealth.

**Poverty:** The 2000 Census of Population provides information on the levels of poverty within Harrisonburg, as well as any concentrations of poverty within the city. The Census Bureau uses a set of dollar income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. There is only one set of “poverty thresholds” for the entire country, which is updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes, excluding capital gains and noncash benefits, such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.

Significantly for Harrisonburg, poverty is not defined for people in institutional group quarters, including college dormitories. They are excluded from the information collected on poverty and are considered neither as “poor” nor as “nonpoor.” Nevertheless, the presence of students and recent graduates of area colleges and universities who are living off-campus and working at entry level wages can be expected to affect the poverty statistics for non-family households within a college town.

Table 3-7 provides an overview of poverty status in 1999 by age and by household type for Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Rockingham County, and Virginia. Charlottesville is included to provide a comparison of the relative impact of student populations suggested above. For 1999, the poverty thresholds were \$8,959 for individuals under 65 years of age, \$13,861 for a family of three (Harrisonburg's average family size). Individuals and families with annual income below these thresholds are considered to be poor for the Census Bureau's statistical purposes.

**Table 3-7. Poverty Status in 1999 by Age and Household Type\***  
**Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Charlottesville and Virginia**

	<b>Harrisonburg</b>		<b>Rockingham County</b>	<b>Charlottesville</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
<b>TOTAL PERSONS IN POVERTY</b>	<b>10,019</b>		<b>5,415</b>	<b>9,950</b>	<b>656,641</b>
<b>BY AGE</b>	<b># Persons</b>	<b>Percent of Poor</b>	<b>Percent of Poor</b>	<b>Percent of Poor</b>	<b>Percent of Poor</b>
5 yrs. & under	572	5.7%	11.0%	5.3%	10.9%
6 to 17 years	618	6.2	18.2	8.9	20.9
18 to 24 years	6,914	69.0	10.8	59.0	16.6
25 to 34 years	749	7.5	14.5	11.0	12.8
35 to 64 years	801	8.0	29.2	12.8	27.8
65 yrs. & over	365	3.6	16.3	3.0	11.0
<b>TOTAL PERCENT IN POVERTY</b>		<b>Percent**</b>	<b>Percent**</b>	<b>Percent**</b>	<b>Percent**</b>
Individuals	10,019	30.1	8.2%	25.9%	9.6%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census of Population, Summary File 3, QT-P33, DP-3, P87, P89.

\* Of the population for whom poverty status is determined, excluding persons in military barracks, institutional group quarters, including dormitories, and unrelated individuals under age 15, such as foster children. Data is based on a sample.

\*\* Of the population for whom poverty status is determined (33,279 persons for Harrisonburg).

Table 3-7 indicates that Harrisonburg and Charlottesville have significantly higher percentages of their populations in poverty compared to Rockingham County and the Commonwealth. The very high percentage of poverty among individuals in the 18-24 age group seen in the two cities must be attributable in part to the presence of working students (students who have earned income and live off-campus) and recent graduates noted above, who do not earn as much as older adults in general. The cities have a lower percentage of their children and elderly population in poverty than Rockingham County or Virginia. In general, the two cities show a remarkable similarity in poverty statistics.

The change in poverty levels for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County between 1990 and 2000 compared to the Commonwealth is demonstrated in Table 3-8. While Virginia's family poverty rate decreased by almost one percent between 1990 and 2000, the county's rate increased by 0.4 percent and the city's rate by a more substantial 3.1 percent.

**Table 3-8. Change in Family Poverty Levels – 1990-2000  
Harrisonburg & Rockingham County**

	Percent of Families in Poverty		1990-2000
	1990	2000	Percent Change
<b>Harrisonburg</b>	8.4%	11.5%	3.1%
<b>Rockingham County</b>	4.9%	5.3%	0.4%
<b>Virginia</b>	7.7%	7.0%	-0.7%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses of Population

The increased immigrant population in the city during the 1990's did not contribute substantially to this increase in poverty, as one might expect. While new immigrant families often have lower incomes than other families in a community, those in Harrisonburg are slightly better off financially as a group than residents born in the United States ("natives"). The 2000 Census indicated that 1,012 of the 3,733 foreign-born city residents not living in group quarters, or 27.1 percent, had total individual incomes in 1999 below the poverty level, while 9,007 of the 29,747 native residents not living in group quarters, or 30.3 percent, lived in poverty.

#### Current Population Estimates

Table 3-9 provides population estimates for the city, Rockingham County, Central Shenandoah Planning District (CSPDC), and Virginia as of July 1, 2002, released by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service in January 2003. This data predicts that the city will continue to grow at a faster rate than the county, the region, and the Commonwealth.

A rough estimate of the total Harrisonburg population as of January 2003 is 42,865. This estimate is based on multiplying the net residential building permits issued during the first ten months of 2002 (263) by the city's average household size (2.53 persons per household).

**Table 3-9. 2001 Final & 2002 Provisional Population Estimates  
Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, PDC 6 and Virginia**

	2000 Census*	July 1, 2001 (final)	July 1, 2002 (provisional)	April 1, 2000-July 1, 2002			
				Change	Percent change**	Average annual rate of change**	Estimated net migration rate**
<b>Harrisonburg</b>	40,453*	41,300	42,200	1,800	4.4%	1.9%	3.3%
<b>Rockingham Co.</b>	67,725	68,700	69,200	1,500	2.2%	1.0%	1.2%
<b>CSPDC</b>	258,774	260,400	262,400	3,700	1.4%	0.6%	0.9%
<b>Virginia</b>	7,078,499	7,196,800	7,293,500	215,000	3.0%	1.3%	1.7%
* Includes all official corrections to 2000 Census. The 40,453 “corrected” 2000 population for the city is only used in this table, because it is in the original data from Weldon Cooper. It is not used elsewhere in this report because the Census Bureau has not corrected any of its tables to reflect this correction. ** Based on unrounded estimates							

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Demographics & Workforce Section, 1/29/03

### Population Projections

Population projections are often included in planning reports to help guide future plans for public services and facilities. There are many different ways to project future population, and all of them involve a high degree of uncertainty. Variables such as economic growth rates, birth and migration rates, and the enrollment growth rates of JMU and EMU are subject to change from year to year and will greatly affect the accuracy of population projections. It is also important to realize that the rate and distribution of future population growth in the city can be affected in a significant way by the land use policies of the city and surrounding jurisdictions.

Thus, these population projections should be considered merely as a snapshot of how much the city might grow based on past growth trends. As such, they can allow the city to examine whether or not the continuation of past trends is desirable and how current land use policies might be altered to affect these trends and to move the city toward its preferred future.

A range of projections is provided in Table 3-10. The low projection is based upon an average annual growth rate of 1.4 percent for the city calculated by the Weldon Cooper Center for the 1990s. This is considered a low projection because State estimates have traditionally underestimated the population of growing communities. For example, Weldon Cooper estimated

a 1999 city population of 34,800, over 5,600 persons less than the 2000 Census population estimate for the city of 40,453. This low growth rate could be expected only if economic and other conditions depress regional growth and the area universities experience little or no growth during the entire decade.

The high projection is based upon the city maintaining the substantial 31.8% ten-year growth rate experienced during the most recent decade (1990-2000). This projection would depend upon a robust economy and enrollment increases at JMU and EMU higher than current university projections.

The intermediate projection was developed for 2002 and 2007 by Claritas, Inc., a marketing information resources firm. Claritas based these figures upon growth trends from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses, and these numbers were extrapolated out to 2012 for the purposes of this plan. This represents a reasonable mid-range projection.

**Table 3-10. Population Projections Based on Past Trends  
Harrisonburg, 2007, 2012 and 2014**

	Census	Estimate	Projections		
	2000	2002	2007	2012	2014
<b>Low</b>	40,468	41,019	43,972	47,138	48,467
<b>Intermediate</b>	40,468	42,129*	46,308*	50,902	52,958
<b>High</b>	40,468	42,865	49,681	56,496	59,937

Source: \*Claritas, Inc., Sept. 2002; Sympoetica



## Chapter 4 Plan Framework

### Introduction

The Plan Framework Map provides an overview of the main ideas and themes to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The map highlights areas where some degree of change is encouraged or anticipated. Table 4-1 summarizes the guiding policies for each highlighted area on the map. The map is provided at the end of this chapter.

**Table 4-1. Plan Framework Guiding Policies**

Framework	Guiding Policies
City Gateways	Strengthening the city's image and attractiveness by improving entries.
Corridor Enhancement Areas	Improving the condition, character and quality of primary travel corridors.
Greenway Park System	Providing a connected system of parks and greenways.
Low Density Mixed Residential	Encouraging a mix of large and small-lot single family detached residential development areas combined with parks and green spaces.
Medium Density Mixed Residential	Encouraging a mix of small-lot single family detached and attached residential development areas combined with parks and green spaces.
Mixed Use Development Areas	Promoting planned mixed use areas offering innovative combinations of residential and business development.
Downtown Revitalization Area	Reviving downtown as the heart of city – the civic, economic, cultural, and symbolic center of city life.
Edom Road Revitalization Area	Promoting reinvestment and sensitive redevelopment in this older commercial and industrial district.
Neighborhood Conservation Areas	Improving the quality of life in the city's mature neighborhoods.

This chapter further elaborates on the guiding policies provided above and addresses each area identified on the Framework Map. The chapters following this one, particularly Chapter 5, provide the detailed goals, objectives and strategies that will guide the city in the implementation of the framework plan policies in this chapter.

### City Gateways

The Framework Map identifies the city's primary, secondary, and tertiary gateways – places where the regional road network crosses a city boundary. Primary gateways are identified at the city's interstate interchanges. Secondary gateways are found at major secondary road corridor entrances, the entrances for Route 33 (Market Street), Route 11 (Valley Pike), Route 42 (High Street and Virginia Avenue) and Route 659 (Port Republic Road). Other collector roads, where mostly local traffic enters the city, offer tertiary gateways. All these gateways serve as the community's front door, establishing first

impressions and reinforcing images and perceptions of Harrisonburg's character, quality of life and vitality. The city should prepare an evaluation of the visual quality and entry experience at each gateway and plan for appropriate improvements. Such improvements could include updated entry signage, landscape plantings, screening of unsightly views, and new development and redevelopment recommendations.

### **Corridor Enhancement Areas**

The Plan Framework Map highlights the important local and regional travel routes into and through the city, many of which are commercial destinations. Their quality and character strongly influence the city's accessibility, attractiveness and economic vitality. This plan recommends that a special study of each of these corridors be carried out to address such issues as:

- Land use and design quality
- Streetscape improvements
- Vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle circulation
- Access management
- Development, redevelopment and reuse opportunities
- Conservation of special features
- Improvements to utilities and public facilities
- Signage

Some of these corridors include residential areas, which may be under stress due to increased traffic along the corridor. It is particularly important that the corridor studies examine whether these areas should remain residential or be permitted to convert to non-residential uses on a location-specific basis. Conversion to non-residential uses can result in building improvements along the corridor. On the other hand continuous strips of retail and/or office uses can cause access management problems, with many commercial driveways causing dangerous traffic situations. Another consideration regarding conversion to non-residential use is the resultant expansion of the supply of potential retail/office sites in the City. If the demand is not high enough, the result may be spotty conversions that further destabilize the neighborhood. In some cases, existing residential areas along corridors can be improved by the installation of street trees and landscaping that buffer the houses from the road and by traffic calming measures. A mix of residential and non-residential uses may also be appropriate, if the best sites for conversion are identified in the corridor plan and if design standards are applied to mitigate adverse impacts of non-residential uses on neighboring residential uses and on traffic safety.

### **Greenway Park System**

This network of green spaces serves both recreational and environmental functions. It preserves vital elements of nature in the city – the streams, floodplains, and unique wooded sites. These ribbons of green connect the city's parks with trails and linear open spaces, providing protection from flooding, visual relief from urban development and an

attractive recreational environment. The goal of the city is to preserve the environmental and recreational values of these lands through enlightened conservation practices on its own lands and cooperative efforts with private landowners. The latter might include the purchase, acceptance of donation, and suggestion of proffers of land and easements from willing participants. The recommended system includes the Blacks Run Greenway and supports the implementation of that plan.

### **Mixed Residential Areas**

This plan proposes some new patterns of residential development for several remaining large undeveloped areas of the city – planned mixed residential. Two types of mixed residential use are proposed, low density and medium density, as described below:

#### Low Density Mixed Residential

These large undeveloped areas identified on the Plan Framework Map and located at the edge of the city are planned for residential development containing a mix of large and small-lot single family detached dwellings and attractive green spaces. Planned “open space” (also known as “cluster”) developments are desired. The city will create incentives and change its ordinances to allow innovative residential building types and permit creative subdivision design solutions that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and protection of environmental resources. Such innovative residential building types as zero lot-line development and patio homes will be considered as well as other new single family residential forms. The gross density of development in these areas should be in the range of 1 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

#### Medium Density Mixed Residential

These largely undeveloped areas continue the existing medium density character of adjacent areas, but in a different form. They are planned for small-lot single family detached and single family attached neighborhoods where green spaces are integral design features. They should be planned communities that exhibit the same innovative features as described for the low density version of mixed residential development described above. The gross density of development in these areas should be in the range of 4 to 12 dwelling units per acre.

### **Mixed Use Development Areas**

These areas combine residential and non-residential uses in planned neighborhoods where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. Quality architectural design features and strategic placement of green spaces will ensure development compatibility. These areas are prime candidates for “live-work” and traditional neighborhood developments. Live-work developments combine residential and office / service uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area. Live-work spaces

may be combined in the same building or on the same street. All buildings have a similar residential scale.

Traditional neighborhood development permits integrated mixing of residential, retail, office and employment uses to create a neighborhood with the following characteristics:

- The design of the neighborhood allows residents to work, shop, and carry out many of life's other activities within the neighborhood.
- A mix of land uses is provided. The proximity of uses allows residents to walk, ride a bicycle, or take transit for many trips between home, work, shopping, and school.
- A variety of housing types is provided at a range of densities, types (multifamily, townhouse, and single family), and costs. Neighborhoods are heterogeneous mixes of residences in close proximity to commercial and employment uses.
- The neighborhood includes a retail, office, employment, and/or entertainment core to provide economic and social vitality, as well as a major focus and meeting place in the community. The core area may contain high density residential uses as well, particularly in the form of multifamily units on the upper floors of buildings over retail or office uses.
- Architectural, landscape and/or other design measures are employed to ensure compatibility between the different uses.
- The circulation system serves many modes of transportation and provides choices for alternative transportation routes. Streets, alleys, and pedestrian and bike paths connect to the surrounding area. Streets and alleys generally follow a grid pattern to provide these route choices and connections. Traffic calming techniques may be used to reduce vehicle speed and increase pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- The overall intensity of development is designed to be high enough to support transit service.
- A system of parks; open spaces; and civic, public, and institutional uses is included to create a high quality of life and civic identity for the community.
- The cluster concept is embraced so as to concentrate development in environmentally suitable areas and to preserve and protect important environmental and cultural resources.

Live-work areas should include most of the qualities of traditional neighborhood developments except that a concentrated core area is not required, the retail component is very minor, and residential-scale office uses may be more finely mixed with residential uses.

Live-work development is recommended for the following mixed use areas shown on the Plan Framework Map:

- Area in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Mt. Clinton Pike and N. Liberty Street
- Area along Suter Street south of N. Liberty Street
- Area north of E. Market Street and east of I-81.

Traditional neighborhood development is recommended for the following mixed use areas shown on the Plan Framework Map:

- Area west of I-81 bounded by Old Furnace Road, Smithland Road and I-81
- Area between Long Avenue and Hawkins Street south of E. Market Street

The city will be flexible in applying the above location recommendations for the types of mixed use areas. The city may permit a live-work development in a recommended traditional neighborhood development area and vice versa, if the proposed plan exhibits excellent design qualities and is compatible with neighboring areas.

The gross residential density in mixed uses areas outside downtown should not exceed 12 units per acre though all types of residential units are permitted: single family detached, single family attached and apartments. Apartments are permitted only if single family detached and attached units are also provided and together cover a greater percentage of the project site.

### **Revitalization Areas**

The following areas of the city are already developed, but have experienced some symptoms of decline. Revitalization and selected redevelopment, according to thoughtful detailed plans, are needed to ensure that these areas remain assets to the City, property owners, businesses, and residents.

#### Downtown Revitalization Area

In concert with Downtown Renaissance, the City of Harrisonburg seeks to revive downtown as the heart of the city and region, an economic engine, source of civic pride, arts and entertainment center, and quality place to shop, work and live. The boundaries of the downtown area coincide with the city's identified Arts & Cultural District and include the central business core, portions of the James Madison University Campus, and transitional mixed use / residential areas that connect downtown to surrounding neighborhoods. Court Square is the historic and symbolic center; a quarter mile radius from the center of the square defines the area within easy walking distance. The Virginia Main Street approach to revitalizing downtown forms the core principles for improving the area. This approach focuses on organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring. In regard to design, the city will develop with Downtown Renaissance a downtown revitalization plan to guide the rehabilitation and development of the area. This plan will set the appropriate density, intensity and character of downtown. Further guidance on the revitalization of downtown is provided in Chapter 14.

#### Edom Road Revitalization Area

The city seeks to create a redevelopment and revitalization plan for this area located next to downtown, an area that currently exhibits low quality and deteriorating building stock and conflicting land uses. The goal is to encourage reinvestment and to seek coordinated

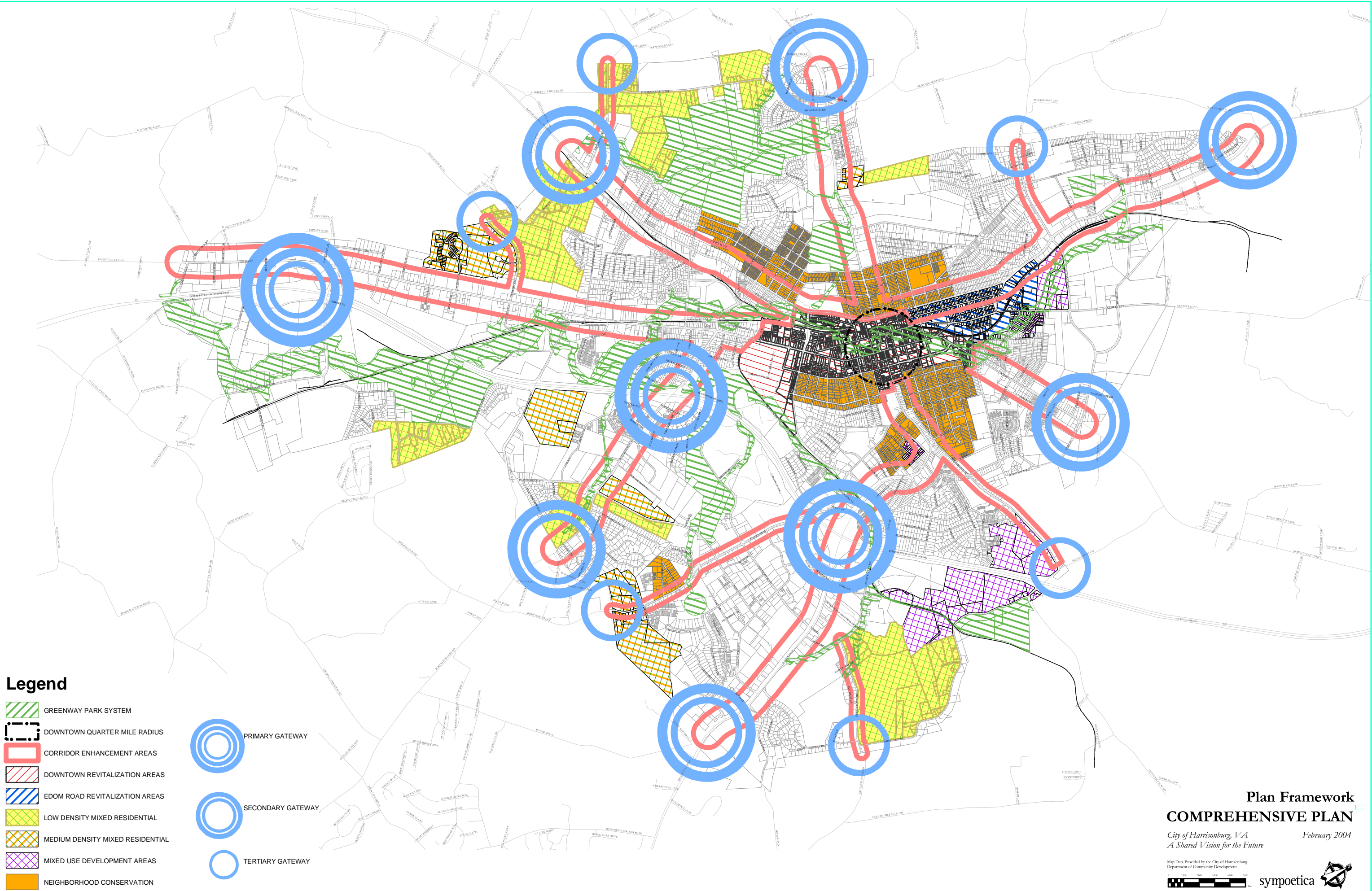
redevelopment of the area transforming it into an attractive and vital city asset. See Chapter 14 for additional guidance.

### **Neighborhood Conservation Areas**













Although many are rich in historic and cultural fabric, these mature neighborhoods face challenges to reinvestment and rehabilitation. Some are suffering from poorly maintained, deteriorating, or vacant homes and spot conversions of single family homes to apartments, often for students. Other areas contain older deteriorating apartment buildings. Some are affected by encroaching commercial development or inappropriate conversion of houses to non-residential uses. Impacts of traffic on highly traveled roadways may also be creating neighborhood stress. This plan recommends that for each of these areas a community-based neighborhood plan be developed to address these and other issues raised by the community.

Chapters 6 and 14 provide goals, objectives and strategies to guide the conservation of these existing neighborhoods.





## Legend

-  GREENWAY PARK SYSTEM
-  DOWNTOWN QUARTER MILE RADIUS
-  CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT AREAS
-  DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AREAS
-  EDM ROAD REVITALIZATION AREAS
-  LOW DENSITY MIXED RESIDENTIAL
-  MEDIUM DENSITY MIXED RESIDENTIAL
-  MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AREAS
-  NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION
-  PRIMARY GATEWAY
-  SECONDARY GATEWAY
-  TERTIARY GATEWAY

## Plan Framework COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Harrisonburg, VA  
A Shared Vision for the Future

February 2004

## **Chapter 5      Land Use & Development Quality**

### **Introduction**

One of the primary functions of a comprehensive plan is to set forth the community's policies regarding the future use of land and the desired quality of development. This chapter addresses these very important land use and development quality issues. While the Plan Framework element, Chapter 4, discusses where changes in land use and development character are encouraged or anticipated, this chapter makes recommendations for land use and development character throughout the city. It provides a recommended map of future land uses, the Land Use Guide, as well as detailed goals, objectives and strategies to implement the map and encourage quality development.

### **Background**

In order to develop the future land use map for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee examined how land is currently used in the city, how it is zoned and what the 1998 Land Use Guide planned for future land use. Geographic Information System (GIS) maps were prepared depicting these existing, zoned and planned land uses. The following provides statistical data derived from these maps.

#### Existing Land Use

A map of existing land use was prepared by linking the city's real estate assessment files to the Department of Planning and Community Development's GIS files. The city's assessors maintain data on each property in the city, including how it is currently used. This data was accessed, recategorized as necessary, and then mapped and checked. From this map, the Department of Planning and Community Development compiled statistics on the acreage in each land use category, which are depicted in the following table and pie chart.



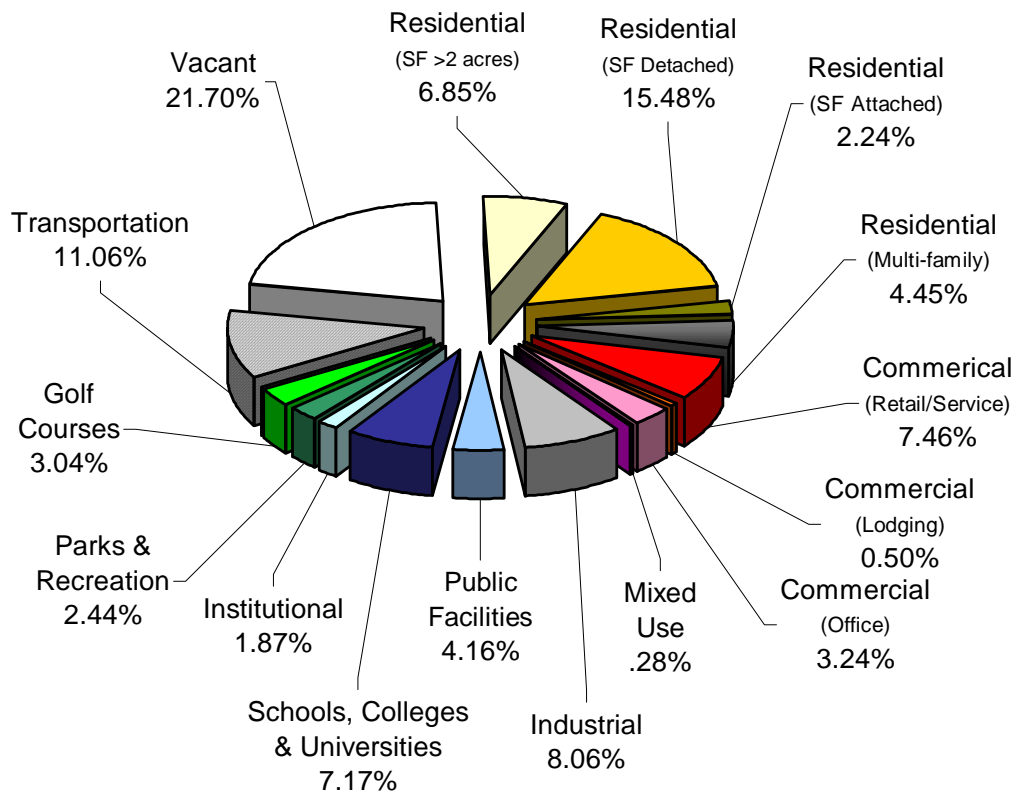
**Table 5-1  
Existing Land Use  
In the City of Harrisonburg**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Area in Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of City Land Area not in Roads / RR</b>	<b>Percentage of Total City Land Area</b>
Vacant	2415.47	24.40 %	21.70 %
Residential - Single Family Greater than 2 acres	762.14	7.70 %	6.85 %
Residential - Single Family Detached	1722.24	17.40 %	15.48 %
Residential - Single Family Attached (duplexes, quadraplexes, townhouses)	249.53	2.52 %	2.24 %
Residential - Multifamily	495.29	5.00 %	4.45 %
Commercial - Retail / Service	829.66	8.38 %	7.46 %
Commercial - Lodging	56.12	0.57 %	0.50 %
Commercial - Office	360.02	3.64 %	3.24 %
Industrial	897.26	9.07 %	8.06 %
Public Facilities (city, county, state, federal properties)	462.74	4.68 %	4.16 %
Schools, Colleges and Universities	798.24	8.07 %	7.17 %
Institutional (churches, cemeteries, service clubs)	207.73	2.10 %	1.87 %
Parks and Recreation	271.34	2.74 %	2.44 %
Golf Courses	338.84	3.42 %	3.04 %
Mixed Use	30.72	0.31 %	0.28 %
<b>SUBTOTAL (Land in Parcels)</b>	<b>9897.34</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>	
Transportation (Roads, Railroads)	1231.17		11.06 %
<b>TOTAL (Total City Area)</b>	<b>11128.51</b>		<b>100.00 %</b>

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

The categories of land use shown in the pie chart should be self-explanatory except for one, single family detached residential greater than 2 acres. These large parcels are categorized as single-family detached residential land because they have a house on them. A number of them are large properties, farms in many cases. However, it would not be accurate to categorize these properties as entirely residential, since significant portions of the properties are not developed. These “minimally developed” properties can easily be developed more densely and are more similar to vacant land than to single family residential subdivisions. The total of vacant land and single-family land greater than 2 acres (3,177 acres) represents the remaining “developable” land in the city (32 % of the city area in parcels).

**Figure 5-1: Existing Land Use**



## Zoning

The city's Official Zoning Map determines the types of uses currently permitted in the city. Zoning districts are applied to both developed and vacant lands and thus determine to a great extent not only the types and locations of existing land uses, but also of future land uses. Table 5-3 provides a breakdown of the city's land area by zoning district.

The Zoning Ordinance includes several overlay districts. The Institutional Overlay District has been applied to 38.51 acres of B-2 zoned land and 162.33 acres of R-3 zoned land; it provides supplemental regulations for Rockingham Memorial Hospital facilities and Eastern Mennonite University, Eastern Mennonite High School and Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. The Residential Professional Overlay District applies to 13.52 acres of land zoned Urban Residential. This overlay permits professional offices and mixed residential/office buildings.

**Table 5-2**  
**City Land Area by Zoning District**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Area in Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of City Land Area Not in Roads / Railroads</b>
R-1 Single Family Residential	3256.90	32.91 %
R-2 Residential	985.55	9.96 %
R-3 Multiple Dwelling Residential	1671.14	16.88 %
R-4 Planned Unit Residential	168.93	1.71 %
U-R Urban Residential	48.34	0.49 %
B-1 Central Business District	76.75	0.78 %
B-2 General Business District	1472.33	14.88 %
M-1 General Industrial	2027.20	20.48 %
County*	190.20	1.92 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9897.34</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

\* Some parcels at the edge of the city have portions that extend into the county. The county acreage is included here; the city acreage has been assigned a city zoning classification.

Many cities are interested to know the zoning of remaining vacant and minimally developed land. Such figures are useful for determining future growth areas and the land uses that will occur in these growth areas. Table 5-3 summarizes the zoning classification of Harrisonburg's remaining vacant and minimally developed land as of Spring 2003.

**Table 5-3**  
**Zoning Classification**  
**Of Vacant and Minimally Developed Land**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Vacant and Minimally Developed Acres</b>
R-1 Single Family Residential	1250.15
R-2 Residential	312.22
R-3 Multiple Dwelling Residential	429.06
R-4 Planned Unit Residential	49.24
U-R Urban Residential	5.28
B-1 Central Business District	6.16
B-2 General Business District	443.35
M-1 General Industrial	590.99
County*	90.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3177.66</b>

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

Almost 40% of the remaining vacant land is zoned for single-family residential development (1250 acres zoned R-1). The city also retains a significant amount of vacant land for economic development; 1,034 acres zoned either B-2 or M-1. As discussed in Chapter 13, Economic Development & Tourism, however, much of the M-1 zoned land is in parcels less than 30 acres in size, which can hamper the recruitment of large manufacturing enterprises.

### Planned Land Use

The 1998 Comprehensive Plan included a Land Use Guide, which recommended future land uses. In some cases, the Land Use Guide recommended land uses different than what current zoning would allow. The Land Use Guide represented the city's policy for what it would like to be, its land use vision so to speak, as opposed to what current regulations allow. Table 5-4 categorizes land according to the planned land uses of the 1998 Land Use Guide.

**Table 5-4  
City Land Use  
As Recommended  
By the 1998 Land Use Guide**

<b>Planned Land Use</b>	<b>Area in Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of City Land Area Not in Roads / Railroads</b>
Low Density Residential	2461.55	24.87 %
Neighborhood Residential	614.16	6.21 %
Medium Density Residential	1300.20	13.14 %
Planned Residential – Single Family	109.71	1.11 %
Planned Residential – Medium Density	120.51	1.22 %
Commercial	1660.77	16.78 %
Planned Business	131.99	1.33 %
Professional	98.68	1.00 %
Institutional	202.54	2.05 %
General Industrial	1641.92	16.59 %
Public / Semi-Public	531.95	5.37 %
Conservation / Recreation	833.16	8.42 %
County*	190.20	1.92 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9897.34</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

\* Some parcels at the edge of the city have portions that extend into the county. The county acreage is included here; the city acreage has been assigned a city Land Use Guide recommendation.

The 1998 Land Use Guide was used as a point of departure for developing the 2004 Land Use Guide. Because much of the city is already developed, the new guide is very similar to the 1998 guide. Major differences can be found, however, in the recommendations for the larger remaining undeveloped areas of the city.

## **The 2004 Land Use Guide**

During the process of preparing this Comprehensive Plan, the Advisory Committee held several community input sessions. With regard to land use, citizens attending the sessions expressed a strong interest in new patterns of development for the remaining undeveloped areas of the city. Many were interested in mixed housing and mixed use types of development rather than large single-use areas. In particular, citizens wanted to limit the number of future large apartment complexes and instead wanted to encourage more single family residential development. Future multifamily development would be integrated into the community if incorporated into mixed use developments. These comments from citizens are reflected the 2004 Land Use Guide. The guide also includes other changes to the 1998 Guide, including:

- changes in recommended land uses to reflect the actual uses that have been built
- planned new parks, schools and public facilities
- recategorization of schools as public facilities rather than conservation/recreation
- small changes recommended by citizens and the CPAC

The 2004 Land Use Guide, provided at the end of this chapter, recommends future land uses in the city. It is the official land use policy map of the Comprehensive Plan and is to be used as a guide in decisions on such matters as rezoning and special use permit proposals and the location of public facilities. The categories of land use on the map are described below.

### **Low Density Residential**

These areas consist of single family detached dwellings with a maximum density of 1 to 4 units per acre. Low density sections are found mainly in and around well established neighborhoods. The low density residential areas are designed to maintain the existing character of neighborhoods and to provide traditional areas for home ownership.

### **Low Density Mixed Residential**

These large undeveloped areas located at the edge of the city are planned for residential development containing a mix of large and small-lot single family detached dwellings and attractive green spaces. Planned “open space” (also known as “cluster”) developments are encouraged. The intent is to allow innovative residential building types and permit creative subdivision design solutions that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and protection of environmental resources. Such innovative residential building types as zero lot-line development and patio homes will be considered as well as other new single family residential forms. The gross density of development in these areas should be in the range of 1 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

### **Neighborhood Residential**

These are older neighborhoods, which can be characterized by large housing units on small lots. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill

development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood.

### **Medium Density Residential**

The medium density residential areas are designated in areas near major thoroughfares or commercial areas. Most of these areas have been developed or are approved for development of a variety of housing types such as single-family, duplex, and in special circumstances, apartments. Depending on the specific site characteristics, densities in these areas may range from 1 to 15 units per acre.

### **Medium Density Mixed Residential**

These largely undeveloped areas continue the existing medium density character of adjacent areas, but in a different form. They are planned for small-lot single family detached and single family attached neighborhoods where green spaces are integral design features. Apartments could also be permitted under special circumstances. They should be planned communities that exhibit the same innovative features as described for the low density version of mixed residential development described above. The gross density of development in these areas should be in the range of 4 to 12 dwelling units per acre.

### **High Density Residential**

A number of areas in the city have been developed in high density residential use, mostly apartment buildings at densities ranging from 12 to 15 dwelling units per acre. Many of these existing clusters of multifamily development and adjacent areas approved or planned for such development are identified as high density residential on the Land Use Guide.

### **Mixed Use Development Areas**

The Mixed Use Development category includes both existing and proposed new mixed use areas. Downtown is an existing area that exhibits and is planned to continue to contain a mix of land uses. The quality and character of the mix of uses in downtown should be governed by a downtown revitalization plan, as recommended in Chapter 14, Revitalization. New mixed use areas shown on the Land Use Guide map are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in planned neighborhoods where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. Quality architectural design features and strategic placement of green spaces will ensure development compatibility. These areas are prime candidates for “live-work” and traditional neighborhood developments. Live-work developments combine residential and office / service uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area. Live-work spaces may be combined in the same building or on the same street. All buildings have a similar residential scale. Traditional neighborhood development permits integrated mixing of residential, retail, office and employment uses to create a neighborhood with the following characteristics:

- The design of the neighborhood allows residents to work, shop, and carry out many of life’s other activities within the neighborhood.

- A mix of land uses is provided. The proximity of uses allows residents to walk, ride a bicycle, or take transit for many trips between home, work, shopping, and school.
- A variety of housing types is provided at a range of densities, types (multifamily, townhouse, and single family), and costs. Neighborhoods are heterogeneous mixes of residences in close proximity to commercial and employment uses.
- The neighborhood includes a retail, office, employment, and/or entertainment core to provide economic and social vitality, as well as a major focus and meeting place in the community.
- The circulation system serves many modes of transportation and provides choices for alternative transportation routes. Streets, alleys, and pedestrian and bike paths connect to the surrounding area. Streets and alleys generally follow a grid pattern to provide these route choices and connections. Traffic calming techniques may be used to reduce vehicle speed and increase pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- The overall intensity of development is designed to be high enough to support transit service.
- A system of parks; open spaces; and civic, public, and institutional uses is included to create a high quality of life and civic identity for the community.
- The cluster concept is embraced so as to concentrate development in environmentally suitable areas and to preserve and protect important environmental and cultural resources.

The gross residential density in areas outside downtown should not exceed 12 units per acre though all types of residential units are permitted: single family detached, single family attached and apartments. Apartments are permitted only if single family detached and attached units are also provided and together cover a greater percentage of the project site. Residential densities in downtown may be higher than 12 units per acre and shall conform to the recommendations of the downtown master plan to be prepared and adopted subsequent to the adoption of this comprehensive plan.

## **Commercial**

Commercial uses include retail, office, wholesale, or service functions. Restaurant and lodging uses are also included. These areas are generally found along the city's major travel corridors. The largest concentration of commercial land use is located between E. Market Street and Reservoir Street and includes the Valley Mall, a number of shopping centers, and significant office development.

## **Planned Business**

These areas are suitable for commercial development but need careful controls to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses. The maintenance of functional and aesthetic integrity should be emphasized in review of applications for development and redevelopment and should address such matters as: control of access; use of service roads or reverse frontage development; landscaping and buffering; parking; setback; signage; building mass and height; and orientation in regard to aesthetic concerns.

## **Professional**

These areas are designated for professional service oriented uses with consideration to the character of the area. These uses are found in the residential areas along major thoroughfares and adjacent to the Central Business District. Conversion of houses in these areas to office and professional service uses is permitted with appropriate attention to maintaining compatibility with adjacent residential areas in the same manner as described for Planned Business areas.

## **Industrial**

These areas are composed of land and structures used for light and general manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, high-technology, research and development and related activities. They include the major existing and future employment areas of the city.

## **Public / Semi-Public**

These lands are designated for public and semi-public use. They include lands owned or leased by the Commonwealth of Virginia (except for institutions of higher learning), the federal government, the City of Harrisonburg, and other governmental organizations. Examples of uses included in this category are public schools, libraries, City Hall and City administrative and support facilities. City parks are included in the Conservation, Recreation and Open Space category

## **Institutional**

Lands designated for development by certain nonprofit and public institutional uses such as colleges and universities, hospitals, offices of nonprofit organizations, community assembly uses and institutions that provide for the shelter and care of people.

## **Conservation, Recreation and Open Space**

The city's parks and golf course are included in this category, as well as private open space recreation uses, such as country clubs.

Table 5-5 presents the amounts and percentages of the various land uses recommended by the 2004 Land Use Guide. Note the additions of mixed residential and mixed use land as well as a more accurate reflection of the amount of land planned for public facilities. Existing multifamily lands and adjacent lands planned to develop in multifamily residential use are categorized as high density residential. The 1998 Land Use Guide did not show a high density residential land use category.



**Table 5-5  
City Land Use  
As Recommended  
By the 2004 Land Use Guide**

<b>Planned Land Use</b>	<b>Area in Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of City Land Area Not in Roads / Railroads</b>
Low Density Residential	1662.48	16.80
Low Density Mixed Residential	797.73	8.06
Neighborhood Residential	614.12	6.20
Medium Density Residential	646.93	6.54
Medium Density Mixed Residential	314.21	3.17
High Density Residential	287.72	2.91
Mixed Use Development	376.13	3.80
Commercial	1513.52	15.29
Planned Business	83.82	0.85
Professional	82.78	0.84
Industrial	1359.39	13.73
Institutional	201.54	2.04
Public / Semi-Public	964.80	9.75
Conservation, Recreation and Open Space	770.54	7.79
County*	221.64	2.24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9897.35</b>	<b>100.01</b>

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

\* Some parcels at the edge of the city have portions that extend into the county. The county acreage is included here; the city acreage has been assigned a city Land Use Guide recommendation.

### Development Character and Quality

While the designation of recommended future land uses for areas of the city is important, many citizens and the CPAC also expressed interest in improvement of the quality of the land uses developed. There is keen interest in improved landscaping, preservation of green spaces and historic resources, better directional signage, less obtrusive commercial signage, and more reasonable commercial lighting levels. Citizens desired improved design quality in new developments and in infill and redevelopment activities. A number expressed concern about the aesthetic character of entrances into the city and of the major travel corridors. They also wanted the City to reconsider the design of streets, particularly whether street widths might be reduced in appropriate locations, and the expansion of sidewalks and bicycle trail systems.

The following goals, objectives and strategies address the major land use changes recommended by the Plan Framework Map and 2004 Land Use Guide as well as recommended policies to improve the design and character of new development and redevelopment.

## Land Use & Development Quality Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Goal 1. To improve the quality and compatibility of land use and development.

Objective 1.1 To promote development and redevelopment that reinforces the city's unique character and sense of place.

Strategy 1.1.1 To work with citizens to identify design elements that define the city's unique character and sense of place or that would improve design quality. Administration of a community character or visual preference survey would help in this effort.

Strategy 1.1.2 To develop a set of design guidelines for new development and redevelopment based on these design elements. Such design guidelines might address such matters as:

- Landscaping
- Preservation of green space
- Preservation of historic resources
- Placement of buildings and parking lots
- Building bulk and height
- How buildings address the street
- Signage
- Lighting

Strategy 1.1.3 To incorporate appropriate elements of the design guidelines into the city's land use codes, while leaving other elements discretionary.

Objective 1.2 To ensure that the design of streets, public facilities, and other public investments reinforces the city's unique character and sense of place.

Strategy 1.2.1 To use the same process as outlined under Objective 1.1 to develop design guidelines for public development projects.

Strategy 1.2.2 To review and revise the city's street standards so as not to jeopardize VDOT funding, yet at the same time to seek to reduce street widths, incorporate traffic calming measures and/or permit low impact development design features.

Objective 1.3 To create positive images of the city through landscaping and design improvements at the city's gateways and along major travel corridors.

Strategy 1.3.1 To prepare an evaluation of the visual quality and entry experience at each gateway shown on the Plan Framework Map and plan for appropriate improvements. Such improvements could include updated entry signage, landscape plantings, screening of unsightly views, and new development and redevelopment recommendations. Improved signage from gateways to major destinations should be considered as part of gateway plans.

- Strategy 1.3.2 To conduct a special study of each of the corridor enhancement areas shown on the Plan Framework Map to address such issues as:
- Land use and design quality
  - Streetscape improvements
  - Vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle circulation
  - Access management
  - Development, redevelopment and reuse opportunities
  - Conservation of special features
  - Improvements to utilities and public facilities
  - Signage
- Objective 1.4 To encourage mixed use development where different types of properties enhance and complement one another.
- Strategy 1.4.1 To promote the development of mixed residential and mixed use areas as recommended on the Plan Framework Map, Land Use Guide and in the text of this plan.
- Strategy 1.4.2 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for the development of low density and medium density mixed residential neighborhoods as identified on the Plan Framework Map and Land Use Guide. Ordinance provisions would allow innovative residential building types and permit creative subdivision design solutions that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and protection of historic and environmental resources.
- Strategy 1.4.3 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for the development of live-work neighborhoods with characteristics similar to the mixed residential neighborhoods but with compatible residential-scale office uses permitted as well.
- Strategy 1.4.4 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for traditional neighborhood development as described in the plan text.
- Objective 1.5 To ensure that new development of residential, commercial and industrial properties will be compatible with surrounding properties.
- Strategy 1.5.1 To revise the zoning ordinance to require landscape buffers, screening, or alternative architectural solutions to provide transitions between potentially incompatible land uses.
- Objective 1.6 To rezone properties into conformity with the new comprehensive plan, in order to reduce incompatibility.
- Strategy 1.6.1 To remove the potential for development or redevelopment of uses incompatible with their surroundings by initiating appropriate rezonings or text amendments as indicated by the Land Use Guide.

Objective 1.7      To encourage and promote aesthetically pleasing high-end residential communities.

Strategy 1.7.1      To include in the city’s land use codes and manuals design provisions and performance standards to improve the design quality of all residential development. Such provisions and standards may address:

- Building setback and orientation standards that enhance social interaction.
- Street system design that promotes connectivity and addresses traffic calming measures to reduce speeding.
- Requirements for sidewalks and trails that facilitate and encourage walking and bicycle use.
- Streetscape planting requirements.
- Standards for the placement of parking areas and garages so as to avoid streetscapes dominated by parking lots and garage doors.
- Size, quality, design, character, and facilities in preserved open spaces.

Strategy 1.7.2      To require, permit and/or provide incentives for “open space” or “cluster” development so as to preserve green space within new subdivisions.

Goal 2.      To promote novel patterns of development like those developed early in the city’s history – vital, well planned and well integrated mixed-housing and mixed-use urban areas of distinct character.

Objective 2.1      To designate recommended mixed housing and mixed use areas.

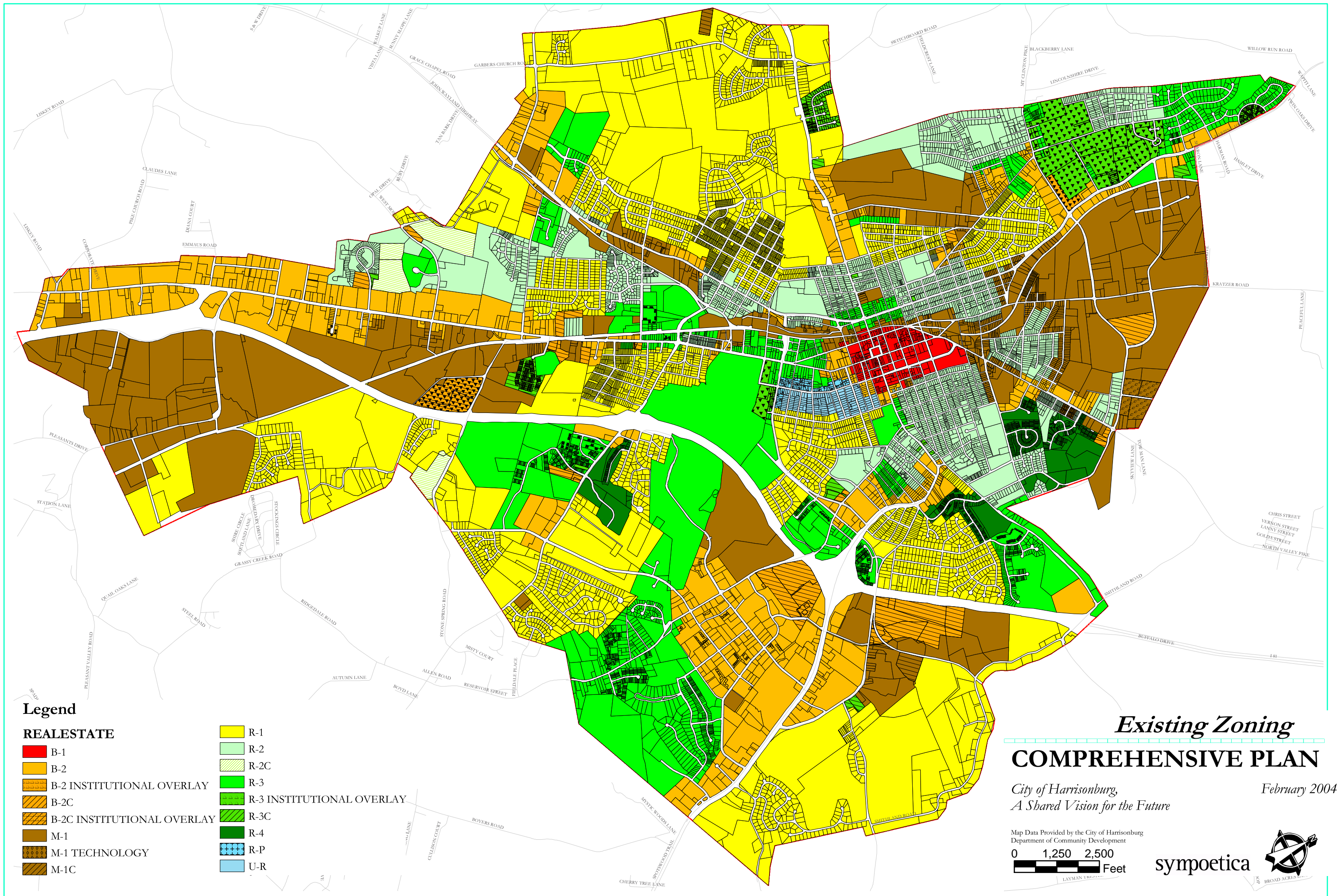
Strategy 2.1.1      To promote the development of mixed residential and mixed use areas as recommended on the Plan Framework Map, Land Use Guide and in the text of this plan.

Objective 2.2      To adopt zoning, subdivision and other measures to promote the development of mixed-housing and mixed-use urban areas of distinct character.

Strategy 2.2.1      To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for the development of low density and medium density mixed residential neighborhoods as identified on the Plan Framework Map and Land Use Guide. Ordinance provisions would allow innovative residential building types and permit creative subdivision design solutions that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and protection of historic and environmental resources.

















- Strategy 2.2.2 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for the development of live-work neighborhoods with characteristics similar to the mixed residential neighborhoods but with compatible residential-scale office uses permitted as well.
- Strategy 2.2.3 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for traditional neighborhood development as described in the plan text.





**Legend**

**REALESTATE**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  B-1                        |  R-1                       |  R-2  |
|  B-2                        |  R-2C                      |  R-3  |
|  B-2 INSTITUTIONAL OVERLAY  |  R-3 INSTITUTIONAL OVERLAY |  R-3C |
|  B-2C                       |  R-4                       |  R-P  |
|  B-2C INSTITUTIONAL OVERLAY |  U-R                       |  |
|  M-1                        |   |  |
|  M-1 TECHNOLOGY             |   |  |
|  M-1C                       |   |  |

*Existing Zoning*  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

*City of Harrisonburg,  
A Shared Vision for the Future*

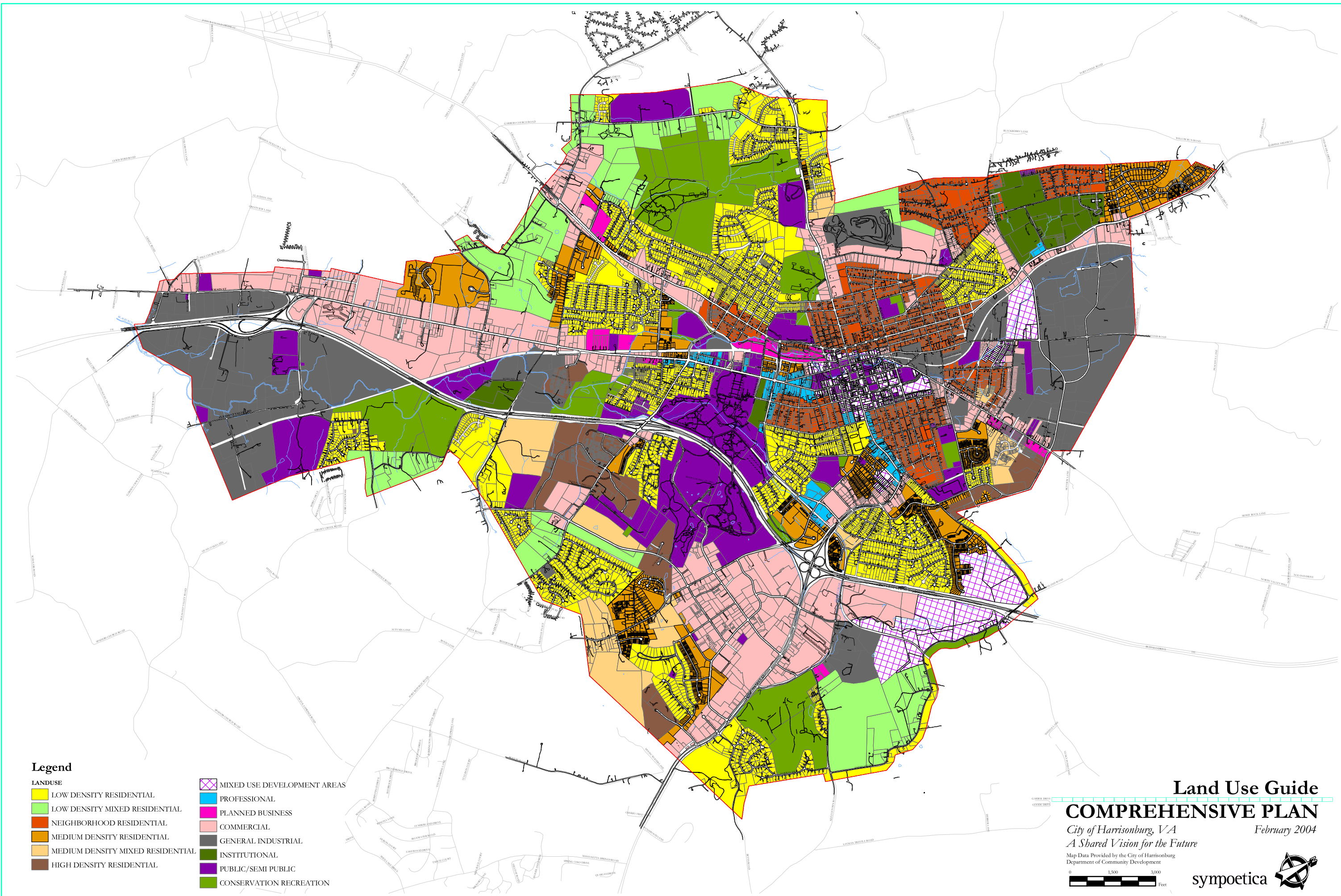
February 2004

Map Data Provided by the City of Harrisonburg  
Department of Community Development

0 1,250 2,500 Feet







## Legend

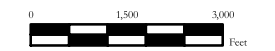
LANDUSE	
	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	LOW DENSITY MIXED RESIDENTIAL
	NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL
	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	MEDIUM DENSITY MIXED RESIDENTIAL
	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AREAS
	PROFESSIONAL
	PLANNED BUSINESS
	COMMERCIAL
	GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
	INSTITUTIONAL
	PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC
	CONSERVATION RECREATION

## Land Use Guide COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Harrisonburg, VA  
*A Shared Vision for the Future*

February 2004

Map Data Provided by the City of Harrisonburg  
Department of Community Development



## **Chapter 6                      Neighborhoods & Housing**

### **Introduction**

A major goal of this plan is to improve the livability of the city's neighborhoods. For existing neighborhoods, this may be achieved through conservation, stabilization and revitalization activities. For new neighborhoods, the city plans to provide new zoning and subdivision mechanisms to encourage attractive and vital new residential areas to be constructed.

Citizens at community input meetings expressed an interest in the quality and character of housing in their neighborhoods. While some were concerned that higher priced housing was no longer being built to a great extent in the city, others were concerned about housing affordability. This plan therefore focuses on ensuring that a range of housing types is provided to meet the needs of people at various income levels.

### **Background**

#### Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods were often the subject of discussions at community meetings held to provide input to this plan. Citizens are proud of their neighborhoods and protective of them. Many expressed concern about the stresses some neighborhoods in the city are experiencing. Some were concerned about the appearance of their neighborhoods, the low level of upkeep of some of the houses, the conversion of single family homes into rental apartments, and the turning of lawns into parking lots. Many felt that the conversion of homes into student apartments has acted as a destabilizing force, reducing property values and the livability of neighborhoods for families. Other citizens expressed concerns about a lack of neighborhood parks and green spaces, street trees and sidewalks.

Some citizens were particularly interested in having the city examine incompatible uses affecting their neighborhoods. There are instances where zoning allows incompatible industrial or commercial uses within or adjacent to residential areas; these uses adversely affect the livability of the neighborhood. Concerns about the impact of new development on neighborhoods also surfaced at the meetings. There was particular concern about the traffic impacts of large new developments, such as shopping centers and apartment complexes.

The keen interest that citizens expressed in their neighborhoods lead the framers of this plan to recommend that citizens be involved in efforts to conserve, stabilize, and revitalize their neighborhoods. The plan recommends that detailed neighborhood plans be prepared to address the issues brought up by citizens and that residents of the neighborhoods be engaged to help prepare these plans.

#### Housing

Citizens also spoke up about housing issues. Some felt that the City has an overabundance of rental apartments. They felt that large complexes of single residential types were not the best



types of neighborhoods. New neighborhoods offering a mix of housing types were of interest to a number of citizens. Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to allow a wider variety of single family residential housing types, to restrict the development of more large multifamily housing complexes, and to provide a more balanced range of housing choices are therefore included in this plan's recommendations.

Other citizens were concerned about the availability of affordable housing, including housing affordable to low income families, to middle income families and to first-time home buyers. An increase in housing opportunities for the elderly was also of interest. While these citizens perceive a lack of affordable housing in the city, others felt that the city has its fair share of such housing and that Rockingham County should be increasing its share of the affordable housing available in the region. Cooperation and collaboration between the city and county is necessary to ensure that the housing affordability issue is addressed comprehensively.

A high level of home ownership was of interest to a number of citizens who felt that increased home ownership would improve neighborhoods. Programs to increase homeownership were strongly supported, including the conversion of existing rental properties into owner-occupied dwellings, creating new homes and providing assistance for first-time buyers.

In order to better understand the housing situation, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee examined available housing data for the city. The characteristics of Harrisonburg's housing stock, such as the mix of housing types, tenure, vacancy rates, age and condition, provide insight into the housing opportunities available within the city, as well as the city's general economic vitality. This analysis of housing information from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) and from city building permit data assisted CPAC in framing the goals, objectives and strategies of this chapter. Yet, additional data on housing opportunities will be needed to address the affordability issue.

**Housing Supply:** According to the U. S. Census Bureau, Harrisonburg's housing stock grew by 1,892 units during the 1990s to a total of 13,689 in the year 2000. An estimate based on city building permit data brings the total housing units to approximately 15,105 as of the end of 2002. Table 6-1 presents trends in the mix of housing types within the city's housing stock since 1990. Single-family detached units currently comprise approximately 36 percent of the city's housing stock, single-family attached units (townhouses and duplexes) almost 19 percent, multi-family units about 43 percent, and mobile homes and other miscellaneous units make up the remaining approximately two percent.

This housing mix data indicates the possible leveling off of a 30-year trend toward a greater percentage of multi-family housing within the city. While the numbers of multi-family dwellings has continued to increase, the recent growth in single-family attached dwellings has outpaced the growth in multi-family units, so that multi-family units at the end of 2002 represented four percent less of the total housing stock than in 2000. Less than a third of the 713 new units authorized since 2000 were single-family detached dwellings, however.

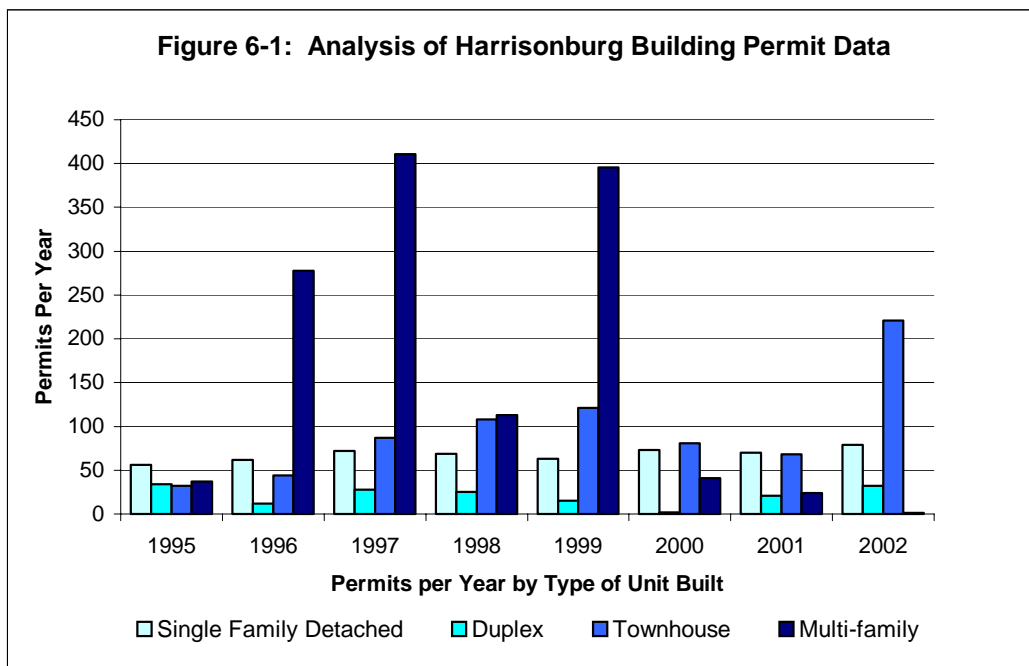
**Table 6-1. Trends in Housing Mix, 1990-2002, Harrisonburg**

Housing Unit Type	1990		2000		2002	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-Family Detached	4,599	42.2%	5,203	38.0%	5,425	35.9%
Duplex and Townhouse	1,700	15.6	2,382	17.4	2,807	18.6
Multi-Family	4,200	38.5	6,495	47.4	6,561	43.4
Mobile Homes & Other*	401	3.7	312	2.3	312	2.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,900</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,689</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 1990-2000 Censuses of Population & Housing; 2002 estimate from City Building Permit Data

\* Includes 9 "Other living quarters", such as an RV.

Figure 6-1 illustrates building permit data for the last eight years. While single family detached housing and duplex construction levels remained relatively constant, townhouse construction levels fluctuated up and down. Multifamily permits show a large increase between 1996 and 1999, then a precipitous drop-off in activity. Recently submitted subdivision plats may predict an upswing in both duplex and townhouse construction, with single family detached housing construction remaining relatively level and multifamily housing construction increasing some over 2002, but not returning to previous boom year levels.



**Occupancy and Tenure:** Table 6-2 provides 2000 Census data on the occupancy rates and tenure (units owned or rented) of the city's housing stock. Of the 13,689 total housing units reported by the Census within Harrisonburg as of April 2000, only about four percent were vacant. There is a trend toward a greater percentage of housing in rental vs. owner-occupied units within the city, with rental units increasing from 54.7 percent of all housing in 1990 to 61 percent in 2000. This reflects the boom in apartment construction in the 1990s, which was not matched by the production of for-sale units.

**Table 6-2. Housing Occupancy and Tenure  
Harrisonburg, 1990 and 2000**

SUBJECT	1990		2000		1990-2000 % Change in Numbers of Units
	#	%	#	%	
<b>OCCUPANCY STATUS</b>					
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	10,900	100.0	13,698	100.0	25.6
Occupied housing units	10,310	94.6	13,133	95.9	27.4
Vacant housing units	590	5.4	556	4.1	-5.8
<b>TENURE</b>					
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	10,310	100.0	13,133	100.0	
Owner-occupied units	4,343	42.1	5,125	39.0	18.0
Renter-occupied units	5,967	57.9	8,008	61.0	34.2
<b>VACANCY STATUS</b>					
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	590	100.0	556	100.0	
For rent	343	58.1	274	49.3	-20.1
For sale only	66	11.2	86	15.5	30.3
Rented or sold, not occupied	69	11.7	75	13.5	
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use	35	5.9	37	6.7	5.7
For migrant workers	0	0	1	0.2	
Other vacant*	77	13.1	83	14.9	
<b>VACANCY RATES</b>					<b>Change in Percentage</b>
Homeowner vacancy rate		1.5		1.7	0.2
Rental vacancy rate		5.4		3.3	-2.1

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

There are two vacancy rates shown in Table 6-2. The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of vacant units for sale to the total homeowner inventory. It is determined by dividing the number of vacant for-sale units by the sum of the city's owner-occupied units and vacant for-sale units. The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of vacant rental units to the total rental housing

inventory. It is found by dividing the number of vacant units for rent by the sum of the city's renter-occupied units and the number of vacant units for rent.

When the Census was taken in April 2000, the city's homeowner vacancy rate stood at 1.7 percent in 2000, while the rental vacancy rate was 3.3 percent. Interestingly, the rental vacancy rate was 2.1 percent less than the rental vacancy rate recorded by the 1990 Census. This is in spite of the fact that the number of rental units increased by over 34 percent between 1990 and 2000.

**Student Housing:** The impact of JMU and EMU student housing demands must be considered in any Harrisonburg housing study. While the JMU student population increased by 3,961 between 1990 and 2000, JMU added only 418 beds of on-campus housing. JMU now has approximately 5,900 students housed on-campus and reports no vacancies. For the 2003-04 school year, this left about 9,700 students to find off-campus housing. EMU currently houses approximately 700 students in university-owned housing, but reports that it could house another 100 students in existing on-campus housing. Approximately 500 EMU students live off-campus.

In spite of the low rental vacancy rate reported by the 2000 Census, the HRHA study estimated an oversupply of student housing of about 1,400 beds as of Fall 2000. This may be due to the surge in student-oriented apartment construction in the late 1990s that may not have been completed as of the April 2000 Census in projects such as Pheasant Run, Stone Gate, Fox Hill, and Sun Chase. In fact, the HRHA study counted 1,030 new beds for students being constructed during 2000-01 in these four new apartment complexes.

This surge is now coming to an end. According to city building permit records, only one multi-family unit received a building permit for 2002. With total enrollment at JMU now topping 15,000 and another 1,000-2,000 students in the Harrisonburg housing market from EMU and nearby Bridgewater College, the student population appears to be catching up with the supply once again. Nevertheless, student housing will continue to be an important factor in city housing policy into the future.

**Housing Value and Housing Costs:** Housing costs and housing values affect who can afford to live in a community on one hand, and the economic health of the community on the other. Housing costs and values also reflect the relative supply of housing and can be an indication of the desirability of the community as a place to live.

As can be seen from Table 6-3, while the median value of an owner-occupied house in Harrisonburg is the highest of all area jurisdictions, and remains higher than in Charlottesville, the value of the city's housing has not grown as rapidly as the value of housing in Rockingham County. The rate of increase in housing value slowed considerably during the 1990s compared to the 1980s for all of the jurisdictions listed.

**Table 6-3. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing  
Harrisonburg and Area Jurisdictions  
1980-2000**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change 1980-1990</b>	<b>Percent Change 1990-2000</b>
<b>Harrisonburg</b>	\$54,000	\$89,326	\$122,700	65.4%	37.4%
<b>Charlottesville</b>	N/A	\$85,000	\$117,800	-	38.6
<b>Staunton</b>	\$38,600	\$62,600	\$ 87,500	62.2	39.8
<b>Waynesboro</b>	\$41,700	\$67,600	\$ 89,300	62.1	32.1
<b>Augusta County</b>	\$41,100	\$70,200	\$110,900	70.8	58.0
<b>Rockingham County</b>	\$41,000	\$71,800	\$107,700	75.1	50.0

Source: 1998 Comprehensive Plan Update, 1990 & 2000 U.S. Censuses of Population & Housing

In spite of Harrisonburg's high median owner-occupied housing value relative to the other jurisdictions listed, there is a growing trend for new higher priced homes to be built in Rockingham County, according to the August 2000 housing study prepared for the HRHA. The study indicates that most higher priced homes are being built in the county on the east side of I-81, with the primary reason cited being a lack of attractive, appropriately zoned land in the city and the availability of more easily developed tracts within the county. Higher development costs within the city were also noted as a contributing factor in this trend.

**Existing Affordable Housing Programs:** While there is a desire to increase the availability of high-end housing within the city, there still exists a need for affordable owner-occupied housing units. Harrisonburg is fortunate to have an active and successful redevelopment and housing authority in the HRHA, which has been addressing the affordable housing needs of city residents since 1955. One of the principal housing goals of HRHA during the coming years is to focus on increasing homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income city residents.

The authority's Local Homeownership Development Loan Program lends construction funds to non-profit organizations such as Hope Community Builders to build affordable homes to sell to moderate-income families. The authority has committed \$100,000 for this program each fiscal

year since 1992. Down payment assistance to qualifying purchasers in this program is provided through forgivable loans from its Residential Mortgage Loan Program.

The authority's homeownership initiatives received a major boost in 2002 with creation of the Valley Housing Alliance (VHA), which is a partnership of existing community housing organizations, including HRHA, Hope Community Builders, Rebuild Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, and Central Virginia Habitat for Humanity. The goal of the alliance is to collaborate on programs that promote affordable housing and diminish substandard housing conditions in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham area. The VHA completed a strategic plan in the summer of 2003 and is working on an update of the 2000 HRHA housing study, planned for completion by the end of 2003.

**Rental Housing Costs:** Rental rates did not increase substantially between 1990 and 2000. The Census Bureau collects data on gross rent, which is the monthly rental rate plus the average monthly cost of utilities. The median gross rent increased from \$410 per month in 1990 to \$480 per month in 2000. However, the percentage of households that paid more than 35 percent of their monthly household income on rent increased considerably between 1990-2000, rising from approximately 19 percent of households in 1990 to almost 34 percent of households in 2000. This should not be of too much concern because, for the large number of student households in the city, parents are paying many of the students' rents.

**Subsidized Rental Housing:** According to the HRHA housing study, the city has 1,365 subsidized apartment units, 100 units of public housing, 1,060 Section 8 apartment units and 208 affordable apartment units built under the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. According to the HRHA Executive Director, the Section 8 units built between 1975 and 1985 are beginning to be converted to market rate units as federal law permits. The HRHA's Section 8 voucher program had a waiting list of 221 persons as of November 2002; public housing had a waiting list of 118 as of December 2002; and the Authority's Lineweaver Section 8 elderly apartments has a waiting list of 41. Therefore, the need for affordable rental housing still exists within the area.

**Summary of Housing Issues:** There are a number of housing issues facing the city in the coming years. These include the continuing need for affordable rental housing, the need to improve the balance of owner- vs. renter-occupied housing and the percentage of higher end vs. subsidized housing, and a lack of suitable land for single-family detached housing development within the city.

Affordable Housing -The 2000 HRHA study cited the influx of Hispanic immigrants during the 1990s to work in the poultry industry and the demand for affordable housing and services of this new population. Since that study was completed, the HRHA Executive Director reports that there has been reduced recruitment of immigrant workers for the poultry industry as the industry moves through a period of regional decline. Thus, while the current immigrant population may place strains on some city services, this problem is likely to be alleviated if the reduced immigrant hiring in the poultry industry eventually causes an out-migration of immigrant workers to seek employment in other areas. Nevertheless, with waiting lists for all of HRHA's affordable housing continuing, the need for affordable rental housing persists.

Homeownership Rate - As noted, rental housing units have increasingly dominated the city's housing stock during the past several decades. A large percentage of these units are in off-campus student housing, and there has been an oversupply of these units in recent years. The current decline in the construction of new multi-family and other rental units may permit the demand for student housing to catch up with the supply.

Lack of Higher Priced Housing Opportunities - The HRHA study confirmed that most higher priced homes are being constructed in Rockingham County due in part to a lack of suitable single-family residential land in the city and higher development costs within the city. Remaining R-1 zoned land was reported to have topographic and limestone problems and to be on the west side of Harrisonburg, while the demand for single-family units was reported to be primarily east of I-81. The study recommended that the city consider providing incentives for small-lot single-family homes with on-site amenities that could be marketed to older adults. The study indicates that such homes can be priced at or above single-family home prices if sufficient amenities are included and the homes are well built. This would provide the city with a unique marketing niche, rather than attempting to compete with the county for the larger-lot single-family home market. Marketing to empty nesters and retirees has the added advantage of attracting fewer school-aged children per household than a typical single-family home.

## **Neighborhoods & Housing Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 3. To strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote the development of new neighborhoods that are quiet, safe, beautiful, walkable, enhance social interaction, and offer a balanced range of housing choices.

Objective 3.1 To work with neighborhoods to identify neighborhood strengths, weaknesses and needs and to develop plans of action for neighborhood improvement.

Strategy 3.1.1 To develop a priority list of neighborhoods, for which neighborhood improvement plans will be developed, focusing first on the neighborhood conservation areas identified on the Plan Framework Map.

Strategy 3.1.2 To review the priority list annually as neighborhood plans are completed and as issues and priorities change.

Strategy 3.1.3 To develop and implement a planning approach and process that assures involvement of residents and landowners in preparing the plans for their neighborhoods (e.g., neighborhood planning task force, resident/owner input sessions, neighborhood design charrettes, etc.)

Strategy 3.1.4 To assist neighborhoods in setting up appropriate neighborhood representative organizations to assist the city and other partners in implementing neighborhood plans.

Strategy 3.1.5 To involve all appropriate city departments and programs in the neighborhood planning process to insure a coordinated planning and implementation effort.

- Objective 3.2 To limit the conversion of single family houses into duplexes and apartments in residential neighborhoods.
- Strategy 3.2.1 To review the city’s ordinances for any further revisions needed to prevent or limit conversions.
- Strategy 3.2.2 To develop a set of policies to limit rezonings and special use permits for conversions. Such policies should contain criteria regarding the locations and neighborhood and building conditions that warrant permission of conversion as well as neighborhood plan recommendations regarding conversions to rental housing.
- Strategy 3.2.3 To train city staff to be vigilant in the approval of kitchen and bath additions that might lead to apartment conversions and to obtain affidavits from homeowners making such additions as to their intentions.
- Strategy 3.2.4 To consider implementing a rental housing registration and/or inspection program to enforce occupancy restrictions and maintain records on approved rental units, among other program goals. Sufficient funding will need to be secured to establish this new program.
- Objective 3.3 To promote well designed new neighborhoods in the furtherance of this goal.
- Strategy 3.3.1 To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or create incentives for the development of new residential neighborhoods that contain a mix of housing types, in areas shown on the plan framework map.
- Strategy 3.3.2 To include in the city’s land use codes and manuals design provisions and performance standards to improve the design quality of all residential development. Such provisions and standards may address:
- Building setback and orientation standards that enhance social interaction.
  - Street system design that promotes connectivity and addresses traffic calming measures to reduce speeding.
  - Requirements for sidewalks and trails that facilitate and encourage walking and bicycle use.
  - Streetscape planting requirements.
  - Standards for the placement of parking areas and garages so as to avoid streetscapes dominated by parking lots and garage doors.
  - Size, quality, design, character, and facilities for preserved open spaces.
- Strategy 3.3.3 To require, permit and/or provide incentives for “open space” or “cluster” development so as to preserve green space within new subdivisions.



- Objective 3.4      To develop approaches to increase the percentage of single family detached housing units to a minimum of 45% of the total number of housing units in the city.
- Strategy 3.4.1      To approve new high density multi-family development for only select areas, as recommended in the Land Use Guide.
- Strategy 3.4.2      To review and amend the Zoning Ordinance so as to increase opportunities for single family residential development affordable to households in a range of incomes. Strategy 3.4.1 and Strategy 3.4.2 might be achieved by such alternative measures as:
- Rezoning selected undeveloped R-3 zoned areas to R-2 or R-1;
  - Revising the text of the R-3 zoning district to permit multifamily residential development by special use permit, not by right; or,
  - Creating a new residential zoning district for multi-family development only, and removing multifamily residential as a permitted or special use in R-3; or,
  - Reviewing and revising the residential zones to permit small lot and innovative forms of single family residential development as appropriate.
- Objective 3.5      To consider and seek to mitigate the potential impacts of rezoning and public investment decisions on neighborhoods.
- Strategy 3.5.1      To require applicants for rezonings and special use permits to prepare and submit with their applications an impact analysis addressing such issues as: projected increase in population and demand for school facilities and other public facilities, impacts on vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic and circulation, water and sewer service needs, storm water run-off quantity and quality impacts, visual impacts, impacts to historic and environmental resources, etc. The analysis should address proposed measures to mitigate impacts. The level of analysis required should reflect the size and potential impact of the project.
- Strategy 3.5.2      To prepare and submit to the Planning Commission and City Council similar impact analyses for public investment projects, such as roads, public buildings and other public facilities.
- Strategy 3.5.3      To work with VDOT to reduce and mitigate adverse impacts of the future widening of I-81 on neighborhoods, businesses, and other areas along the corridor.

Goal 4. To meet the current and future needs of residents for affordable housing.

Objective 4.1 To study housing affordability in the region.

Strategy 4.1.1 To work with the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the Valley Housing Alliance to study and define housing affordability at the full range of income levels in the city and region.

Strategy 4.1.2 To work with Rockingham County to determine and obtain agreement on each locality's fair share of affordable housing within the city-county region and to develop goals for the provision of affordable housing.

Objective 4.2 To partner with the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (H-RHA), the Valley Housing Alliance, and other community housing providers (serving the elderly, disabled, homeless, low/moderate income families, victims of violence, etc.) to address community housing needs throughout the region.

Strategy 4.2.1 To support the creation of the Valley Housing Partnership to monitor and develop programs to meet city-county affordable housing goals.

Strategy 4.2.2 To include as Valley Housing Partnership members all significant players in the regional housing market, such as, the City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Valley Housing Alliance, non-profit community housing providers (serving the elderly, disabled, homeless, low/moderate income families, victims of violence, etc.), and private sector housing developers and providers, etc., as well as other interested parties, including Harrisonburg City Public Schools and Rockingham County Public Schools.

Strategy 4.2.3 To assist in the implementation of Valley Housing Partnership affordable housing programs.

Strategy 4.2.4 To consider implementing a rental housing inspection and/or registration program to ensure that such housing is decent as well as affordable and to enforce occupancy restrictions and maintain records on approved rental units. Sufficient funding will need to be secured to establish this new program.

Objective 4.3 To promote home ownership so as to increase the proportion of owner-occupied units in the city.

Strategy 4.3.1 To support expansion of the Family Self-Sufficiency and Lease to Homeownership programs of the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and other home ownership programs that might be developed by H-RHA.

- Strategy 4.3.2 To work with private developers, non-profit community housing providers and rental housing providers to offer home-ownership opportunities for first-time low-moderate income homeowners (e.g., through HOME, Hope VI and other available housing programs).
- Objective 4.4 To identify areas of the city for affordable housing while promoting mixed income housing neighborhoods.
- Strategy 4.4.1 To designate the entire city as an area within the region currently providing housing affordable to a wide range of income levels.
- Strategy 4.4.2 To designate mixed use areas on the Land Use Guide as potential locations for new housing affordable to a wide range of income levels, including low to moderate income households.

## **Chapter 7                      Education, Arts & Culture**

### **Introduction**

Harrisonburg is a city of education with two major universities and an excellent public school system. Many citizens of the city are affiliated with the schools, either working there or attending class, making school life a very important aspect of city life. The city is dedicated to making its public schools the best that they can be. Cooperation between City Council and the School Board is essential for meeting this broad goal. Cooperation between the city and the universities is also sought in efforts to meet many of the goals, objectives and strategies of this plan, from those supporting adult education to promotion of the arts to economic development. The city wishes to continue its positive relationships with James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University.

Cultural enrichment is provided not only by the city's educational institutions but also by the library system and arts organizations. This plan supports expansion of the city's cultural offerings in an effort to enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

### **Background**

#### Schools

The city's Public Schools have adopted both vision and mission statements to guide its work.

*Vision Statement:* "Motivate, Educate, Celebrate: Learning together for a better future."

*Mission Statement:* "Our mission is to prepare every student to succeed and to contribute to a better world. We will strive to do this in an academically-challenging, safe, and nurturing environment where all students, parents, and community members are active participants."

The schools strive to provide a quality education to every student who comes to them.

**School Facilities:** Approximately 10% of the city's total population is enrolled in the city public school system. This is in part due to the population growth of the city in recent years, and the growth in the average number of people per household, which is relatively high compared to most other jurisdictions which are seeing decreasing numbers of people per household. This amount and pattern of population increases is attributed to the large amount of immigration the city has experienced during the past decade, especially Latino and Eastern European immigrants. Officials estimate that without this immigration, the school population would be virtually stable.

The city's public school system currently operates six public school facilities, with a new high school now under construction and scheduled for completion in the autumn of 2004. The physical capacity of school buildings is a dynamic measurement, due in part to the changing standards that result from legislative requirements to provide additional services for special populations. The original "intended" or "design" capacities are larger than the current "actual" capacities, due to

these changing requirements. Table 7-1 shows a summary of the physical plants, while the following table shows the capacities of the current school facilities.

**Table 7-1. Schools, 2002**

<b>School</b>	<b>Date of Original Construction</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
<b>Harrisonburg High School</b>	1927	23
<b>Thomas Harrison Middle School</b>	1989	34
<b>Keister Elementary</b>	1955	17
<b>Spotswood Elementary</b>	1960	16
<b>Stone Spring Elementary</b>	1993	23
<b>Waterman Elementary</b>	1911	9

Source: Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan, 1998

**Table 7-2. School Capacities**

<b>School</b>	<b>2002 Totals</b>	<b>Actual Capacity*</b>	<b>Intended Capacity**</b>
<b>Harrisonburg High School</b>	1,188	1000	1,200
<b>Thomas Harrison Middle School</b>	930	1,200***	915
<b>Keister ES</b>	461	424	492
<b>Spotswood ES</b>	444	425	493
<b>Stone Spring ES</b>	566	488	492
<b>Waterman ES</b>	437	447	451
<b>Totals</b>	4,026	3,984	4,043

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools

\* number of students the facility can accommodate while providing space for mandated or specialized programming.

\*\* number of students the facility can accommodate w/o mandated or specialized programming, as originally designed.

\*\*\* The actual capacity of THMS will increase to 1,200 when it is converted from a middle school to grades 5-6.

At present, the gaps in available capacity are filled by the use of 26 mobile classroom units. Once the current and planned construction of additional facilities is complete, the need for these mobile units will be eliminated.

**School Services.** Of the 4,000 total students in the system, 1,200 (30%) require ESL services. This is an extraordinarily high percentage compared to other jurisdictions in the commonwealth. A relatively small proportion of the ESL student population have language proficiency; most need extra help, which puts further strains on the system.

In recent years, federal and state legislative requirements have increased the challenges to the system, by assigning additional responsibilities for special segments of the student population, including those in lower socio-economic groups, ESL population, special populations (disabled, etc.) and those who need alternative education environments.

The city school system currently cooperates with the county school system through a joint consortium for purchasing (food supplies, etc.) and jointly operates the special education program for “low-incident” (low rate of occurrence) special populations in which shared services allow economies of scale for both systems. Massanutten Technical Center, which offers technical and vocational training and classes for high school and adult students, is also operated jointly by the city and county school systems.

**Future Needs and Planned Facilities:** As indicated in Table 7-2, the total current enrollment of the system is approximately 4,000 students. This reflects substantial average annual increases in recent years, due in large part to immigration. These trends are shown in Table 7-3.

**Table 7-3. School Enrollment Trends**

Year:	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of Students	3,591	3,743	3,843	4,000
% Increase from previous year	2.53%	4.23%	2.67%	4.06%

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools

These trends have raised several challenges in recent years, cited by the school board in a report to the public published in February of 2003, as follows:

- Chronic overcrowding conditions at the elementary and middle school levels
- Continued student enrollment growth within the Harrisonburg City school system
- The need to use the current school buildings in an effective, fiscally responsible manner
- Need to insure that the Kindergarten through grade eight configuration plan that is ultimately adopted by the school board will maintain and/or strengthen instructional delivery and programming.

The new high school now under construction will address current and future needs for those upper grade levels. It will also make the current high school site available for alternative uses. The need for additional facilities can now be focused on the middle and lower grades. As it studied the various alternatives for grade configuration and the implications for school

construction choices, the school board adopted several key guiding principles to help shape those programmatic and infrastructure decisions. These are:

- A middle school of 1,300 or more students is too large; another school is needed.
- Neighborhood schools should be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
- The integrated teaching model used at Thomas Harrison Middle School should continue and be expanded under any configuration model implemented.
- Teacher salaries should remain a priority.
- Small class size should be maintained.
- The adopted grade configuration plan should not limit student opportunities to participate in quality after-school programs.
- The adopted grade configuration plan should be an educational blueprint that meets our city's future needs.

Table 7-4 shows the school system's forecast for future enrollments. The school system currently is planning for a long-term future annual growth rate of 2.6% in the public school population for enrollment purposes, based upon recent trends. This growth rate would result in an increase of 50% in total enrollment during the next decade and a half. These forecasts are consistent with the overall population forecasts of the city contained in Chapter 3.

**Table 7-4. School Enrollment Forecasts**

Grade	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>K</b>	333	341	349	357	365	373	381	389	397	405	413	421	429	437	445
<b>1</b>	318	342	350	358	366	374	383	391	399	407	416	424	432	440	448
<b>2</b>	333	326	351	359	367	376	384	393	401	409	418	426	435	443	452
<b>3</b>	294	342	335	360	368	377	386	394	403	411	420	429	437	446	455
<b>4</b>	299	302	351	343	369	378	387	396	404	413	422	431	440	449	458
<b>5</b>	327	307	309	360	352	379	388	397	406	415	424	433	442	451	460
<b>6</b>	292	336	315	318	369	362	388	398	407	416	426	435	444	454	463
<b>7</b>	318	300	344	323	326	379	371	399	408	418	427	437	446	456	466
<b>8</b>	309	326	307	353	331	334	388	381	409	419	429	438	448	458	468
<b>9</b>	363	317	335	315	362	340	343	399	390	420	430	440	450	460	470
<b>10</b>	322	372	325	343	324	372	349	352	409	401	430	441	451	461	472
<b>11</b>	265	330	382	334	352	332	381	358	361	420	411	442	452	463	473
<b>12</b>	226	272	339	392	342	362	341	391	367	370	430	422	453	464	475
<b>Total</b>	3,999	4,212	4,392	4,515	4,595	4,736	4,870	5,036	5,162	5,325	5,496	5,618	5,761	5,883	6,004

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools

**Service and Facility Standards:** For instructional staffing, the system uses class size targets and state standards for special education. Average class size targets are:

Grades K-3:	18, 19, 20 and 21 students per teacher, respectively
Grades 4-5:	22 students per teacher
Grades 6-8:	23 students per teacher (not formally adopted)
Grades 9-12:	24 students per teacher (not formally adopted)

For school sites, the system uses the following standards:

Elementary School:	20 acres (gross)
Middle School:	40 acres (gross)
High School:	60 acres (gross)

### Libraries

The Massanutten Regional Library (MRL) is owned and operated jointly by the City of Harrisonburg, the County of Rockingham and the County of Page. The Library's mission statement is as follows:

*Mission Statement:* "The Massanutten Regional Library supports individual achievement and community enrichment through reading and life-long learning. The Library is a reliable and trusted source of information for its patrons and ensures a free and unbiased flow of ideas for the community."

**Existing Facilities and Services:** The Main Library is located at 174 South Main Street in downtown Harrisonburg. There are also seven branch libraries in Rockingham and Page counties. In addition, bookmobile service is provided to various sites in the city and the counties. An increasingly important service and facility provision in libraries today is Internet access. The MRL measures Internet use by the number of patron/customer sessions in each building. The number of sessions is on an upward trend.

**Future Needs and Planned Facilities:** While there are no current plans for capital improvements, within five to 10 years, the MRL will need to establish a small branch on the east side of the city in light of the significant proportion of development occurring there. Capital maintenance will be the main focus of budgeting efforts over the next five years.

In the longer term – 20 years -- a major suburban branch facility will be needed on the east side of the city, as well as major renovation to the Main Library building downtown. The Main Library is expected to continue in its downtown location due to the broad benefits that such a location provides both for library patrons as well as the community at large. The downtown location has a high level of user activity and also helps draw people to the downtown area on evenings and weekends. It serves as a magnet and helps support local businesses.



## The Arts & Cultural Offerings

The City of Harrisonburg offers a number of opportunities and venues for the arts and other cultural pursuits. Harrisonburg contributed \$40,000 in 2000 to help establish the Arts Council of the Valley, a nonprofit organization that aims to create a more vibrant community through support of arts and cultural activities. Ongoing operations are funded by the City, Rockingham County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, membership dues, and donations. The Council administers grants to artists, holds monthly membership meetings, publishes a media guide, maintains a directory of artists and cultural organizations, maintains a resource library, and is planning an arts administration workshop series.

The city boasts two independent performing arts theaters, the Valley Playhouse and Court Square Theater. The Shenandoah Valley Watercolor Society promotes interest in watercolor painting.

A number of museums and art galleries are located in the city, including the Virginia Quilt Museum in downtown, the Sawhill and New Image Galleries on the James Madison University campus, and the Hartzler Library Art Gallery, the Hostetter Museum of Natural History and the Brackbill Planetarium on the Eastern Mennonite University campus.

Both JMU and EMU offer performing arts seasons of theater, music, and dance. James Madison University has planned the development of a Cultural Arts campus on the west side of Main Street across from the historic quadrangle.

## **Education, Arts & Culture Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 5. To provide a wide and equitably distributed range of educational and cultural opportunities for all ages.

Objective 5.1 To work with the School Board to assure the quality of public education and excellent educational outcomes for all enrolled children.

Objective 5.2 To continue to work with the School Board to monitor enrollment trends and projections to ensure quality educational facilities.

Strategy 5.2.1 To work collaboratively with the School Board on the implementation of school facility improvements.

Strategy 5.2.2 To assist the School Board in obtaining needed additional administrative space.

Strategy 5.2.3 To coordinate city staff and school staff annual estimates and forecasts of population and school enrollment.

Strategy 5.2.4 To hold annual meetings between the City Council and the School Board to review population growth and enrollment trends and discuss current and future school needs.

Objective 5.3 To work with the School Board to encourage needed neighborhood elementary schools in underserved areas of the city.

- Strategy 5.3.1 To locate an elementary school in each quadrant of the city as the need arises.
- Strategy 5.3.2 To design all new schools to fit into their neighborhood. Consideration should be given to making them easily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists, not dominated by parking lots, attractive, residential in scale and setback, well-landscaped, and with lighting designed not to intrude into the neighborhood.
- Objective 5.4 To promote educational programs for workforce development, training, retraining and life-long learning.
  - Strategy 5.4.1 To ensure close communication between the Harrisonburg Department of Economic Development, Blue Ridge Community College, Massanutten Technical Center, Dayton Learning Center, and existing and prospective businesses regarding educational needs of the workforce.
  - Strategy 5.4.2 To support Blue Ridge Community College in efforts to obtain grants for workforce development programs.
  - Strategy 5.4.3 To encourage James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University, Blue Ridge Community College, and Bridgewater College to make degree and enrichment courses available to city residents.
- Objective 5.5 To improve library offerings through expansion of internet access and the development of branch libraries.
  - Strategy 5.5.1 To monitor the amount of internet use at the main library and its branches so as to provide sufficient computer stations to meet the internet needs of library patrons.
  - Strategy 5.5.2 To plan for future branch library needs on the east side of the city – a small branch, perhaps in rented space, in five to ten years and a major new branch facility as may be needed in the future.
- Objective 5.6 To expand arts and cultural opportunities with a focus on creating a major arts district in the downtown/JMU area.
  - Strategy 5.6.1 To continue promoting the Arts & Cultural District in the downtown area as established by Chapter 5 of the Harrisonburg City Code.
  - Strategy 5.6.2 To continue to support the Arts Council of the Valley.
  - Strategy 5.6.3 To support efforts of Downtown Renaissance to bring arts facilities and performances downtown.
  - Strategy 5.6.4 To cooperate with James Madison University in the development of a Cultural Arts campus on the west side of Main Street.
  - Strategy 5.6.5 To include an arts calendar or a link to an arts calendar on the city's web site.
  - Strategy 5.6.6 To display the work of local artists in city facilities.

## **Chapter 8            Historic Resources**

### **Introduction**

The City of Harrisonburg has a rich history and retains many quality historic resources. Citizens recognize these resources, particularly those downtown and in close-in neighborhoods, as providing much of the city's unique architectural character. The city has not made historic preservation a major focus, but interest in preservation is growing.

### **Background**

The Plan Background Information Supplement contains a five-page brief history of the city as well as listings of the city's historic resources surveyed to date. The reader is directed to the supplement to find this more detailed information.

#### Harrisonburg's Historic Assets and Previous Survey Efforts

Harrisonburg is fortunate that, while many historic resources have been lost, many historic properties still remain to tell the story of the city's rich history and to enrich the lives of its citizens. Beginning in 1958, these properties have been documented through historic sites surveys, providing the city with an invaluable inventory of its historic resources.

In 1958, the national HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey) inventory recorded the more prominent buildings in the city. Several additional buildings were added to the inventory by Isaac Terrall in 1972 during his survey of historic sites in Rockingham County. These early surveys included very little photographic documentation and lacked adequate written information for evaluating the properties. In addition, a number of these buildings have been destroyed over the years.

A more detailed survey of the downtown was undertaken in 1981 by Ann McCleary for the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (VHLC, now the Virginia Department of Historic Resources-VDHR) at the request of the Harrisonburg Downtown Development Corporation. This survey recorded 296 buildings and sites in sufficient detail to allow recommendations for the preservation of the downtown's architecturally and historically significant properties.

The remainder of the city was surveyed by Ms. McCleary in 1983-84 as part of a Rockingham County survey, including numerous individual buildings in the newly annexed portion of Harrisonburg, mostly farmsteads. During the summer of 1984 Ms. McCleary also surveyed 25 buildings in the historic core of the JMU campus. Both of these surveys were compiled into a 1985 VHLC-published survey report entitled, "The Valley Regional Preservation Plan: Evaluation of Architectural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources in Harrisonburg, Virginia." The report noted that surveyed properties are concentrated largely in the downtown area and on the JMU campus and recommended further survey work concentrating on the late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core: High Street, East and West Market Street, Mason and Main Streets, Franklin and Newman Streets, the neighborhoods west of High Street and on the north side of the downtown. Ms. McCleary also recommended

that a future survey document significant older houses within the many modern subdivisions on the fringes of the older city.

At that time, the survey also listed four city properties on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places, including the Thomas Harrison House, the Anthony Hockman House, the Joshua Wilton House and the County Courthouse. One property, the Morrison House, was noted as removed from the Register after its recent demolition.

Ms. McCleary indicated that the low number of registered buildings was not indicative of the city's architectural fabric and listed 11 additional downtown buildings as potentially eligible for the state and national registers, including Church of the Brethren, the Ney House, the old First National Bank, Rockingham County Office Building, Rockingham Motor Company, the Newman/Ruddle Building, the Isaac Atkins House, the L & S Diner, Crystal Service, the Chesapeake and Western Railroad Station, and the Craft (Higgins) House. The McCleary survey also included a list of architecturally significant buildings in the downtown study area meriting rehabilitation and/or preservation. The report recommended that the 52 buildings on this list be preserved in their settings to help retain their historic character. A thematic nomination to the register was recommended for railroad-related sites, including the historic warehouses along the tracks. In addition, JMU's original campus was recommended for the Virginia and National Registers as a historic district.

VDHR records show that three individually surveyed historic buildings besides the Morrison House have been demolished since the 1985 survey report, including the Bassford House on N. Liberty, the Jehu Bear House on S. Main and the Henry Ott House at 254 Newman Ave. It also noted the loss of the house of Reuben Harrison, Thomas Harrison's son, in 1982. In addition, many other structures were lost during the 1960's Urban Renewal Program, which cleared blighted areas all over the country for redevelopment. One of the oldest houses in the city, the Henry Ott House (1858) was destroyed by fire in 1975.

In 1983, the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission recommended that the Harrisonburg Post Office be registered. This imposing Georgian Revival building was constructed in 1939. The United States Postal Service never acted to pursue listing of this building on the historic registers.

The next effort at cataloguing the city's historic resources came in 1987, when Land & Community Associates completed a survey of the JMU campus as part of a State-Owned Properties Statewide Survey. This survey listed 36 sites in and around the original quadrangle, including the quad itself. The survey notes that JMU provides the earliest examples of architect Charles Robinson's campus planning for Virginia's colleges, being the first state normal school designed by him. Construction following his original Beaux-Arts scheme occurred between 1908 and 1940. This survey agreed with the McCleary recommendation that the original JMU campus was eligible for the Virginia and National Landmarks.

A list of the survey records from Harrisonburg on file with the VDHR is included in the Plan Background Information Supplement. There are 483 standard VDHR files, plus 24 additional survey files prepared by the Virginia Department of Transportation for transportation

construction projects and to catalogue Harrisonburg's bridges. Missing from this list are the survey files for the 1981 downtown survey, which was done in blocks and assigned survey numbers 115-0027 through 115-0053.

### Historic Preservation Efforts

All of this survey work has left Harrisonburg with a wealth of information on its historic assets and many recommendations for measures to ensure that these resources are protected for future generations. Nevertheless, Harrisonburg remains the only county seat in the Shenandoah Valley from Winchester to Lexington and the only city or town between Winchester and Staunton that does not have a State or National Register-designated district.

Listing on the Virginia and National Registers brings no regulatory requirements for property owners, but makes the properties eligible for state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation of historic structures within the district. It also requires state and federal agencies to avoid actions that might harm historic structures within the district. Properties within historic districts also tend to appreciate in value at a faster rate than other properties, providing benefits to historic property owners and to the community's tax base.

Though the city does not have a designated district, this does not mean that there have not been efforts to establish districts within the city. The VDHR worked with Harrisonburg on two separate districts during the late 1990s. In September 1995, the Planning and Community Development submitted a Preliminary Information Request application for VDHR to determine if a proposed Court Square Historic District would be eligible for listing on the Virginia and National Registers. The proposed district encompassed 35 acres including the original town boundaries around Court Square, as well as along both sides of Main Street from Gay Street on the north to the JMU campus on the south. The proposed district included residential, commercial and governmental buildings dating from the 1870s to the 1930s. It was the stated intent of the proposed district to encourage property owners to take pride in the historic character of the area, to make these properties eligible for state and federal tax incentives for restoration and rehabilitation, and to help preserve the buildings for future generations.

In February 1996, VDHR determined that the proposed district was eligible for listing on the Virginia and National Registers. The Committee for Downtown Harrisonburg requested that the city pursue the designation, but some downtown property owners expressed concern about possible future restrictions on their property. The City Council decided not to nominate the district to the registers.

In October of 1997, the City of Harrisonburg submitted a Preliminary Information Form application for a second proposed historic district, the Old Town Historic District. The Old Town neighborhood, located between downtown and JMU, has long served as a prominent residential area and includes many fine homes dating from the early 1900s. The proposed district was bounded on the north by the 200 block of E. Water Street, on the east by the east side of Ott Street, on the south by the northern side of Cantrell Avenue, and on the west by S. Main Street. In April 1998 the VDHR Review Board determined that the Old Town Historic District would be eligible for listing on the Virginia and National Registers. A group of neighborhood residents

worked on completing survey forms on all of the structures within the proposed district, and by November 1999 had 81 forms completed. The survey work was never completed, so the district has not been nominated to the registers.

Following the two surveys of the JMU campus in the 1980s, little effort was made to nominate the campus to the Virginia and National Registers until 2002, when students in a JMU History class tried to pursue the designation with the JMU Administration. No action has been taken by JMU to date to complete the nomination process. As of 2002, however, the Governor has a new memorandum of agreement with VDHR to encourage more State-owned properties to be listed on the National Register.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Historical Society, located in Dayton, provides a wealth of additional information relating to Harrisonburg's history. In 1995, the Society launched a major initiative to become the finest regional historical society in the Commonwealth. This led to a new 5,000 square-foot exhibit on Rockingham County history, the expansion of its Shenandoah Valley folk art collection, re-engineering of its electric map on Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, and significant additions to its genealogy library. It also maintains an extensive photographic collection.

The most recent historic preservation effort in the city has been directed at the rehabilitation and expansion of the Lucy F. Simms School on Simms Avenue, which is currently used as a community center. A nomination of this historic city school to the Virginia and National Registers has been submitted and is currently under consideration by the Virginia Landmarks Commission.

#### Potential for Future Historic Preservation Efforts

In spite of the fact that none of Harrisonburg's historic properties have been recognized through historic district designation, the city does have the extensive survey and district preparation work completed over the past 20 years. This information provides a rich resource for those interested in the city's fascinating history, as well as a strong foundation for future preservation efforts.

Many communities have realized that their historic buildings not only provide a link to their past, but also a powerful economic asset. Cities such as Staunton and Lexington have had great success using the National Main Street Center's Main Street approach to downtown revitalization, which is a proven comprehensive program for enhancing historic downtown commercial areas. An average of \$39.96 is reinvested in the community for every \$1 spent on Main Street programs nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

In recognition of the great potential of the Main Street approach to assist Harrisonburg in enhancing its downtown, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance is currently pursuing a Main Street revitalization program for the city's historic core. Downtown Renaissance, initiated by City Council in April 2002, is developing a comprehensive vision and master plan to revitalize downtown Harrisonburg based on the Main Street four-point approach. Rehabilitation of historic

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<sup>1</sup> The National Main Street Center web site: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

buildings to enhance the physical appearance of the district is one of the major strategies of the Main Street approach.

Rehabilitation of historic buildings creates local jobs and generates local sales for specialized construction materials. Rehabilitated buildings in traditional downtowns are great locations for the small businesses that drive local economies, because their sizes lend themselves to a variety of smaller retail and office spaces. In many cities, they also have become magnets for incubator businesses, such as the software company in downtown Harrisonburg that was started by a JMU graduate. Harrisonburg's historic buildings provide significant opportunities for such innovative business development.

Historic downtowns have a character that is conducive to tourism and entertainment businesses that can draw revenues from outside of the city as well. Well-preserved downtowns increase the quality of life of the community and help in attracting and retaining new business and industry. All of these benefits also translate into higher tax revenues for the community through higher real property values, higher transient occupancy taxes and higher sales tax revenues. Beyond these benefits, the preservation of the community's historic assets ensures that its history is understood and protected and provides an important context for new development that will respect and enhance the existing community, rather than make it just another "Anytown, U.S.A."

### **Historic Resources Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 6. To celebrate the city's heritage and preserve and protect its historic resources as essential elements of the city's economic health, aesthetic character, and sense of place.

Objective 6.1 To disseminate information about the history and historic resources of the City of Harrisonburg.

- Strategy 6.1.1 To make the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau's new visitors center in the historic Hardesty-Higgins House a sales outlet for historical publications and a source of information on the historic resources and sites in the city.
- Strategy 6.1.2 To create a partnership between the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Massanutten Regional Library to develop a historical research section in the library to which visitors to the Hardesty-Higgins House visitors center could be referred.
- Strategy 6.1.3 To develop a walking tour of historic sites in downtown Harrisonburg with appropriate brochures and signage, such tour to begin at the Hardesty-Higgins House visitors center.
- Strategy 6.1.4 To seek establishment of the Hardesty-Higgins House visitors center or other site in the city as the visitor orientation center for the Cross Keys / Port Republic Civil War Battlefields Cluster in cooperation with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

- Objective 6.2      To promote and recognize quality historic preservation projects.
- Strategy 6.2.1      To partner with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society to implement an annual preservation awards program to recognize quality preservation projects.
- Objective 6.3      To establish historic districts.
- Strategy 6.3.1      To work with local groups and the Department of Historic Resources to seek designation of historic districts in such areas as:
- Court Square (in collaboration with Downtown Renaissance)
  - Old Town (in collaboration with the Old Town Neighborhood)
  - James Madison University historic campus (in collaboration with JMU)
- Strategy 6.3.2      To seek funding from the Department of Historic Resources for survey work and assistance with National Register Historic District nominations.
- Objective 6.4      To conserve city-owned historic resources and to ensure that city development projects respect and reflect the historic character of the city and site context.
- Strategy 6.4.1      To catalogue all city-owned properties that have historic value.
- Strategy 6.4.2      To adopt policies for treatment of city-owned historic properties (maintenance, renovation, additions to, and conditions when demolition warranted) so as to preserve their historic value.
- Strategy 6.4.3      To take advantage of federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits by partnering with the private sector on city property rehabilitation projects.
- Strategy 6.4.4      To assess and mitigate the impacts of all city projects on adjacent historic resources and areas.
- Strategy 6.4.5      To design new city public facilities so that they respect and complement the historic character of the city and site context.



## **Chapter 9                      Natural Resources**

### **Introduction**

Because a comprehensive plan focuses many of its policies on the use of land, it is important to understand the qualities of that land and its natural resources. The geology, topography, soils, vegetation, wildlife, air and water resources provide a framework for wise land use decisions that avoid environmental hazard areas and preserve valued natural resources.

### **Background**

#### Geology

The City of Harrisonburg is located within the valley portion of the Ridge and Valley geologic province. The valley is underlain by sedimentary rocks of limestone, dolomite and shale. A significant characteristic of the limestone and dolomitic rock of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County and the Shenandoah Valley is its tendency to develop caves, solution channels and sink holes as acid rainwater dissolves the rock over time. The geologic term for such limestone/dolomite areas is “karst.” The prevalence of sinkholes is significant because such areas can be unstable. Subsidence can damage roads and buildings, though catastrophic collapse rarely occurs.

Karst areas are particularly susceptible to groundwater contamination because of the direct connection between the surface and groundwater through sinkholes and along cracks in surface bedrock. Contamination that seeps down through the sinkholes and cracks can reach the honeycomb of channels and caves below, potentially travelling long distances through these conduits. While few houses or businesses in the city are dependent on groundwater for their source of drinking water, many homes in Rockingham County are served by wells. Some measures to protect groundwater in karst areas include: prohibition of waste disposal in sinkholes, requirements that stormwater be directed away from sinkholes, and spill containment measures for industrial and other uses handling toxic or potentially polluting materials near sinkholes.

#### Soils

A review of the *Soil Survey of Rockingham County, Virginia* (USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1982), which covers the City of Harrisonburg as well, reveals that the city’s soils are dominated by clayey soils formed from limestone. The primary issues for construction are depth to bedrock and the tendency of these soils to shrink and swell with varying moisture levels.

#### Topography

The city is characterized by rolling topography. Slopes from 0 to 15% present few limitations for development. Land in the 15 – 25 % range is appropriate for residential uses; commercial and industrial development with large buildings and parking areas require a great deal of grading

to be constructed on these slopes and are generally less appropriate. Slopes 25% and over are usually considered unsuitable for development.

### Vegetation and Wildlife

Harrisonburg is an urban area built within an agricultural area. It no longer contains large areas of woodland and natural wildlife habitat. Most wetland areas in Harrisonburg are small. Significant populations of deer are found in several sections of the city, but otherwise most types of wildlife are those found in urban and suburban settings. The citizens of Harrisonburg value the city's remaining green spaces and expressed interest in public meetings in these green spaces being preserved and expanded to the extent possible. Increased tree planting is also supported.

### Water Resources

**Hydrology:** Harrisonburg is drained primarily by two streams, Blacks Run and Cooks Creek. Most of the city sits within the Blacks Run watershed. The area of the city west of Route 42 and South of Route 33 is in the Cooks Creek watershed. Small areas in the northern part of the city drain to the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided the city maps of the 100-year floodplains for Blacks Run and Cooks Creek in 1989. The city uses these maps to regulate development in the 100-year floodplain and to prohibit encroachment in the floodway. As land has developed in the city over time, the amount of impervious surfaces, such as roads, parking lots and rooftops, has changed the flooding regime. It is likely that the city's floodplain maps are no longer accurate. The city is currently pursuing with FEMA the preparation of a new flood study so that more accurate maps can be obtained. These may be useful for ultimately defining the preferred corridor for the Blacks Run Greenway.

**Water Quality:** Water quality is expected to become an important issue in the coming years due to several mandatory and voluntary water quality protection programs initiated by EPA, the State of Virginia, and the Chesapeake Bay states. The first is the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) program and the second is the Shenandoah and Potomac River Basins Tributary Nutrient Reduction and Nutrient Cap Strategies. The third is the new EPA requirement for the City to obtain a water discharge (NPDES) permit for its stormwater management system.

**TMDLs:** The Federal Clean Water Act requires states to identify and clean up water bodies not in compliance with Federal and state water quality standards. Virginia has been required to prepare a list of such "impaired waters" and to determine the total maximum daily (pollutant) loads or TMDLs for each impaired water. The TMDL reflects the total pollutant loading a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards with a margin of safety built in. In 1992, EPA promulgated regulations regarding the development of TMDLs.

Meanwhile, Virginia adopted the *Water Quality Monitoring, Information, and Restoration Act* in 1997, which directed the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to develop a list of impaired waters, to develop TMDLs for them, and to develop implementation plans. For Harrisonburg, four TMDL studies have been completed: two for Blacks Run and two for Cooks Creek. A TMDL study identifies the sources of the pollutants in the watershed and shows how

the pollutant loads from each source must be reduced to meet the water quality standard. For each stream, DEQ has determined that violations occur for both fecal coliforms and benthic organisms. Fecal coliforms are a range of bacteria present in fecal wastes from warm-blooded animals. Their presence indicates the presence of bacteria harmful to humans. Benthic communities are made up of bottom dwelling organisms in streams. The number and types of benthic organisms found in a stream are indicators of pollution levels.

For both the Blacks Run and Cooks Creek fecal coliform studies, the primary sources have been identified as non-point – stormwater run-off pollution as opposed to pollution from a specific point, such as a wastewater treatment plant discharge pipe. Urban non-point sources include leaking sanitary sewer lines, failing septic systems, and pet wastes. Implementation plans will be developed by DEQ in consultation with local landowners and citizens and the city and county to determine what must be done to meet the fecal coliform TMDL pollution load reduction goals. Virginia has chosen to develop TMDL implementation plans that encourage voluntary actions to meet Federal water quality standards. The City of Harrisonburg may, for example, be asked to implement any of a number of measures to reduce fecal waste loads, such as, a sanitary sewer inspection and management program to prevent sewage leaks, increased street cleaning, education programs on septic pump-outs and pet waste clean-up, or ordinances mandating pump-out or pet waste clean-up.

The benthic TMDL studies identify the sources of pollution that adversely affect benthic organisms. Again, non-point source pollution is the problem, and in the City of Harrisonburg, sedimentation is the chief culprit. The benthic TMDL implementation plan may ask Harrisonburg to address these problems by such measures as: improved sedimentation and erosion control regulations and enforcement, stormwater management best management practices (BMPs), a stream bank stabilization program, planting of riparian vegetation, and increased street cleaning.

While Virginia's approach has been to seek voluntary measures to reduce pollution loads, if such measures do not result in better water quality in streams, the state may require that measures be implemented to meet Federal water quality standards. EPA has the legal authority to require enforcement of TMDLs.

Shenandoah and Potomac River Basins, Tributary Nutrient Reduction and Nutrient Cap Strategies: While the TMDL program has as its basis the Clean Water Act and the law enforcement backing of the Federal government, the Shenandoah and Potomac River Basins Tributary Nutrient Reduction and Nutrient Cap Strategies are based on agreements between the Chesapeake Bay watershed states, agreements that are not currently federally enforced.

In 1987, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia signed a Chesapeake Bay Agreement that recognized the role of nutrient pollution (nitrogen and phosphorus) in the Chesapeake Bay's water quality problems. In the 1987 agreement, the states set a goal of reducing controllable annual nitrogen and phosphorus loads into the Bay waters by 40 percent by 2000. In 1992, the states agreed that the most effective way to meet the 40% reduction goal would be to develop specific nutrient reduction strategies for each major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay river basin. With the cooperation of the City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham

County and other localities in the Southern Shenandoah Region, including Augusta, Highland and Page counties, a tributary strategy was developed and adopted in 1996 for the region's portion of the Shenandoah River watershed. The strategy was projected to achieve a reduction of nitrogen loading by 43% and phosphorus loading by 40% for the Southern Shenandoah Region. The reduction was to come from both point and non-point sources. The point sources are the wastewater treatment plants, some of which were proposed to be retrofitted with biological nutrient reduction (BNR) technology to reduce nutrient discharges. The most significant reductions were projected to come, however, from agricultural non-point source reductions through the implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs). The Harrisonburg Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority has since made BNR improvements to the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant. Meanwhile, Rockingham County and the Central Shenandoah Soil and Water Conservation District have worked with farmers to implement agricultural BMPs.

The 1987 Bay Agreement not only set a goal of reducing nutrient pollution by 40% by 2000, but also a goal of capping nutrient loads at that level. In other words, a "cap strategy" would need to be developed to prevent nutrient loads from increasing above the 40% level even as growth in the watershed continues. In March 2001, Virginia issued *the Draft Interim Nutrient Cap Strategy for the Shenandoah and Potomac River Basins*. The Nutrient Cap Strategy is called interim because water quality goals for the Chesapeake Bay are slated to change. The final cap strategy will have to address these new goals, which are not yet finalized. Under the interim cap strategy, the city may be asked to implement stormwater management BMPs not only for new development but also to retrofit existing developed areas.

Phase II Stormwater Management Program: In 1999, EPA published a new rule extending stormwater quality controls to small cities. Large cities had already been required to obtain National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for their stormwater systems, but now small cities would be required to as well. Applications for these NPDES permits were due March 10, 2003. As required by the rule, Harrisonburg's permit application included a description of its proposed stormwater management program to include six minimum control measures:

- Public education and outreach on stormwater impacts
- Public involvement / participation
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination (i.e. elimination of point discharges of pollution into the stormwater management system)
- Construction site stormwater runoff control (i.e. improved erosion and sediment control)
- Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment (urban stormwater management BMPs to control water quality as well as quantity)
- Pollution prevention / good housekeeping for municipal operations

### Air Quality

The City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County are currently considered to be "in attainment" of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (i.e., no violations of the air quality standards have been observed). Recent regulations issued by EPA have revised the standard for ozone,

making it more stringent. A number of communities across Virginia, have been recommended by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for ozone “nonattainment” designation based on monitored data, including Shenandoah Valley communities of Frederick County and Winchester, the Roanoke area, and portions of Page and Madison counties in Shenandoah National Park. There is no ozone monitor in the Harrisonburg area. However, EPA has informed DEQ that it believes that Rockingham County and Harrisonburg are in violation of the ozone standard because surrounding monitors, though at some distance, show violations. DEQ has resisted designating Rockingham and Harrisonburg. It remains to be seen whether EPA will try to force this issue.

### Noise

A primary source of noise in the city of Harrisonburg is Interstate 81. The level of traffic and the high percentage of trucks make this a significant source of noise for properties near the road. Noise levels exceed Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) noise standards at varying distances depending on the presence of screening topography. To address noise, the city should consider avoiding planning residential and other noise sensitive uses adjacent to the interstate or recommend standards for such uses that ensure that both indoor and outdoor ambient noise levels do not exceed FHWA standards.

### Light Pollution

Light pollution has become an increasing concern in a number of localities and has been mentioned by Harrisonburg citizens. As more and more individuals and businesses install security lighting or increase the intensity of existing lights, the problems of poorly designed lighting systems increase. The Comprehensive Plan includes a recommendation to reduce light pollution, while recognizing the importance of quality lighting for crime prevention. State code changes will be needed to implement standards to prevent excessive lighting.

## **Natural Resources Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 7. To preserve and enhance the city’s natural resources and encourage development that is compatible with nature.

Objective 7.1 To keep abreast of environmental issues facing the city and to monitor the city’s environmental health.

Strategy 7.1.1 To tap local expertise as available to keep abreast of environmental issues facing the city and to monitor the city’s environmental health.

Strategy 7.1.2 To prepare an annual or biannual “state of the city’s environment” report using compiled data collected by the city, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Department Conservation and Recreation and other sources and describing and recommending programs to address environmental issues.

- Objective 7.2 To develop water and air quality improvement programs to comply with federal and state standards, programs and requirements.
- Strategy 7.2.1 To continue to develop and implement the city's Phase II storm water management program dealing with improving the quality of storm water runoff.
- Strategy 7.2.2 To work with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department Conservation and Recreation to develop and participate in the implementation of TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) plans for impaired streams and in the implementation of Chesapeake Bay nutrient reduction strategies.
- Strategy 7.2.3 To collaborate with Rockingham County and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in developing an air quality improvement plan should the region be declared to be nonattainment for ozone pollution.
- Objective 7.3 To create a set of environmental performance standards for public and private development and redevelopment projects.
- Strategy 7.3.1 Using state standards where applicable, to prepare a set of environmental performance standards for all development which may include such issues as:
- Pollutant discharges into water resources
  - Air emissions
  - Erosion and sediment control
  - Noise exposure limits
  - Excessive light emissions
  - Energy use and efficiency
  - Protection of environmental features: floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, sinkholes, tree cover
- Sufficient funding will need to be secured to establish this new program.
- Strategy 7.3.2 To ensure coordination with state agencies on project compliance with state environmental standards.
- Strategy 7.3.3 To consider adoption of local environmental performance standards as either policies or regulations after public input.
- Objective 7.4 To preserve and expand green spaces and tree planting in the city.
- Strategy 7.4.1 To consider adopting open space preservation requirements or incentives for new development.
- Strategy 7.4.2 To purchase and accept donations of land for the implementation of the Blacks Run Greenway and other planned greenway and park projects.

- Strategy 7.4.3 To include streetscape improvement plans in downtown, neighborhood conservation area, business revitalization area, and corridor enhancement plans.
- Strategy 7.4.4 To implement landscape improvement demonstration projects at city gateways and other appropriate locations.
- Strategy 7.4.5 To consider adding street tree planting and other landscape requirements for new development and redevelopment in the city's land use codes.
- Strategy 7.4.6 To prepare and implement landscape plans for city public facility development projects.
- Strategy 7.4.7 To provide proper maintenance of city trees to ensure tree health and to minimize damage to utility lines.
- Objective 7.5 To promote resource conservation.
- Strategy 7.5.1 To promote recycling through:
- Continued public education campaigns
  - Adoption of regulations requiring businesses to sort their recyclable solid waste and make it available for collection
  - Giving city purchasing preference to recycled paper
- Strategy 7.5.2 To promote water conservation through:
- Public education campaigns
  - Collaboration with local hardware and building supply stores to promote water conserving fixtures and appliances.

## **Chapter 10            Parks & Recreation**

### **Introduction**

The city's Parks and Recreation System has a considerable effect on the city's quality of life, the health of its citizens, and community economic and environmental sustainability. The city is committed to a well developed Parks and Recreation System because it offers many benefits, including improved health and stress reduction for citizens, resource conservation and protection, flood protection, improved air quality, improved aesthetics, revenue generation, and enhanced property values.

### **Background**

The city's commitment to improved parks and an excellent recreation program is demonstrated by its adoption of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2003. This Master Plan describes existing conditions of the parks and recreation system, provides results of a citizen survey, sets standards for future park development and makes recommendations for needed improvements to the system. The reader is referred to the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003 for detailed background information that was used to develop this Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and strategies. The following summary background information is drawn from the executive summary of the master plan.

### **Survey of Citizens Recreation Interests**

The main objective of the public survey was to obtain information on citizens' patterns of current use, preferences, and desires with the goal of understanding any current and future deficiencies in Parks and Recreation programs and facilities. Other objectives of the study were to discover effectiveness of the city's Parks and Recreation system as a service to the community, to gauge customer satisfaction and to determine current level of use of city parks. The survey was conducted by telephone calls to 400 randomly selected respondents in each of the five voting precincts. A detailed analysis can be found in the appendix of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003. The data gathered was tabulated and charted to reveal many facets of citizens' use patterns and needs. Some of the notable findings included:

- Approximately 85% of Harrisonburg residents use the Parks and Recreation system.
- Overall park use is distributed evenly over each voting precinct.
- Approximately 85% of Harrisonburg households rate their satisfaction with the Parks and Recreation system as good to excellent.
- Picnicking, swimming, hiking, biking and running were the activities most participated in by households.
- Soccer, football, golf, softball, baseball, basketball and tennis were the activities second most participated in by household.
- 65% of Harrisonburg households visited museums as a leisure activity, 42 % visited nature and interpretive centers.



- The top most requested improvements were a walking trail, bike trail, better security and activities for different age groups. Thirty percent of households had no suggested improvements to the Parks and Recreation system.
- The top most requested parks or facilities were a skateboard park, water parks and swimming pools, children's sports fields and walking/bike trails. 31% of households had no suggested improvements to the Parks and Recreation system.
- The top most requested improvements to existing programs and classes were more variety of hours/scheduling, swimming classes, painting classes and better information of what classes are offered.
- Requests for new programs and activities were very diverse. 24% of households had no suggestions for new classes or programs.
- The most desired leisure activities were concerts or music festivals, live theater, arts and crafts events and sporting activities. 70% of respondents did not know or had no suggested improvements.
- Purcell, Hillandale and Westover Parks were the most used parks overall by Harrisonburg households.
- Morrison, Purcell and Westover Parks were the most frequently visited parks on average.
- Hillandale, Purcell and Westover Parks were the most evenly used by residents of each of the five voting precincts.

### Park and Recreation Program Needs

The public survey and the comparative analysis of level of use standards revealed several shortfalls and needs for improvements in the Parks and Recreation system. Many of the needs expressed were in the area of athletic fields, walking trails, swimming pools, indoor hard courts and expanded programs for youth activities. A high demand was expressed for soccer and softball/baseball facilities. This was due to intensive use of existing facilities and the popularity of these sports with the general population as well as specific ethnic groups. In an analysis of available park acreage and distribution of parks by neighborhoods and voting precincts it became evident that the population was relatively well served by larger community parks. However, the availability and distribution of neighborhood and mini parks was generally deficient. The east side of the city is the least well served by these types of parks. This area is where much of the expected population growth is speculated to occur.

The following summarizes the major recommendations of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003:

- Purchase or dedicate sufficient land for several new neighborhood parks in the Waterman, Stone Spring and Simms voting precincts.
- Develop several new mini parks in urban areas around the city.
- Expand and redevelop existing community and neighborhood parks, taking advantage of underutilized spaces.
- Support and develop a city-wide greenway system that includes connections to parks, schools and community facilities.

- Expand the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Center to include additional hard court space, auxiliary gym, improved site circulation and parking, expanded activity rooms and expanded swimming facilities.
- Provide additional youth athletic fields and programs.
- Provide additional youth programs and activities.
- Expand program staffing, volunteers and hours for programs and classes where appropriate.
- Develop the Smithland road property as a major community and athletic park with amenities for the neighborhood in that area.
- Begin planning and development of a new Community Recreation Center in the southeastern sector of the city. The center should be accessible to the general public by mass transportation as well as by walking and bicycling.
- Provide a conveniently located facility for events and performances.
- Develop several new athletic fields including soccer, football, softball and baseball.

The goal, objectives, and strategies listed below focus on the physical facilities recommendations of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003.

### **Parks & Recreation Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 8. To meet the recreation needs of every citizen by providing comprehensive leisure opportunities and developing and maintaining a safe, well-distributed park and recreation system.

Objective 8.1 To continue to support and market Harrisonburg's parks and recreation system as a major community benefit and indirect revenue generator by implementing the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003.

Strategy 8.1.1 To incorporate by reference into this Comprehensive Plan the recommendations, policies, and proposals of the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003.

Strategy 8.1.2 To implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003 starting with the identified 2003-2005 priorities.

Objective 8.2 To integrate parks and recreation programs fully into the city's environmental programs and policies.

Strategy 8.2.1 To assign Parks and Recreation Department staff to work with the Department of Planning & Community Development staff so as to coordinate the department's activities with other city environmental initiatives as recommended under Goal 7.

Strategy 8.2.2 To include water and air quality improvement measures developed under Objective 7.2 into park plans.

Strategy 8.2.3 To apply environmental performance standards developed under Objective 7.3 to all park development projects.

- Objective 8.3      To enhance facilities and programs to fully serve the population's diversity of needs.
- Strategy 8.3.1      To serve needs identified in public meetings and in the telephone survey administered during the development of the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003.
- Strategy 8.3.2      To develop and implement an ongoing process for evaluating public recreation needs, e.g., through general surveys, user surveys, public input meetings, and task forces.
- Objective 8.4      To develop an interconnected, accessible network of park and recreational facilities through development of a greenway system.
- Strategy 8.4.1      To create a network of green spaces that connects the city's parks with trails and linear open spaces. The Blacks Run Greenway plan describes such a greenway. Similar greenways are recommended along Cooks Creek and along a Norfolk Southern rail line recommended to be abandoned as described under Transportation Strategy 9.2.2.
- Strategy 8.4.2      To design the greenways not only to provide recreational opportunities, but also to provide riparian habitat, protection from flooding, pollution filtering and visual relief from urban development, to the extent possible.
- Strategy 8.4.3      To preserve the environmental and recreational values of these lands through enlightened conservation practices on city-owned lands and cooperative efforts with private landowners. The latter might include the purchase, acceptance of donation, and acceptance of proffers of land and easements from willing participants.
- Objective 8.5      To commit to providing high quality well distributed parks and recreation facilities.
- Strategy 8.5.1      To implement improvements at existing parks and recreation facilities as recommended in the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003, including major improvements as follows:
- expansion of the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Center
  - development of the Smithland Road property into a major community and athletic park.

- Strategy 8.5.2 To plan for and develop a limited number of new parks as recommended in the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2003, including:
- neighborhood parks in the Waterman, Stone Spring and Simms voting precincts
  - several new miniparks in urban areas around the city, including downtown
  - a new community recreation center in the southeastern sector of the city.
- Strategy 8.5.3 To cooperate with the public schools in making school recreation facilities available to the general public, as appropriate.
- Objective 8.6 To enhance the appearance, safety and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.
- Strategy 8.6.1 To improve security at existing parks by evaluating use patterns, operation hours, visibility and maintenance.
- Strategy 8.6.2 To create a set of specific design guidelines and standards for city parks and facilities addressing landscaping, architectural design, accessibility, safety and crime prevention.
- Strategy 8.6.3 To incorporate ample landscaping in all park development.
- Strategy 8.6.4 To provide high quality maintenance so as to increase the effective use of facilities and maintain an attractive appearance.

## **Chapter 11            Transportation**

### **Introduction**

The Harrisonburg transportation system is comprised of several varying elements including an interstate highway, principal arterial roadways, a local road system, mass transit, pedestrian trails and sidewalks, bike trails and lanes, and railroads. All facets of this system require constant maintenance, upgrades, replacement, and additions in order to serve the city's population properly. Each element of the system is complimentary to the others and serves the community as a network; increasing usage on one element will likely cause a decreased usage on another.

It is also important to note that transportation and land use need to be linked. Changes in land use can change traffic patterns and affect the demands on transportation resources. And there is growing scientific evidence that the provision of transportation improvements can have impacts on the demand for new development as well as on the welfare of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.

### **Background**

#### City Road System

The city road system consists of multiple classification designations that correspond to traffic volumes or design criteria. The Virginia Department of Transportation classifies streets as local, collector or arterial. Local streets provide direct access to individual homes and receive fewer than 1,000 vehicles per day. Collector streets are intended to support moderate to heavy levels of traffic, routing traffic from and sometimes through residential areas to employment centers and shopping areas. Arterials are designed and intended for consistently heavy traffic volumes, and usually connect towns with each other, and provide linkages to interstate systems. Figure 11-1, included at the end of this chapter, shows the current classifications of City streets. The city receives street maintenance subsidization for accepted streets through VDOT's Urban Allocation Fund. Accepted streets must meet design criteria put forth by VDOT and the city's Design and Construction Standards. Unaccepted streets do not receive city services or maintenance due to the fact that the city does not receive reimbursement for those streets. In addition, the city has a number of undeveloped "paper" streets, which are streets that were planned and platted, but never built. Developers or residents are expected to bear the responsibility of constructing paper streets to facilitate private development needs.

#### Major Street Plan / Master Transportation Plan

In 1994, Harrisonburg, with the help of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), developed the Major Street Plan. VDOT studied the existing and proposed land uses and traffic patterns within the city and surrounding portions of Rockingham County to help the city in determining what upgrades to the current road system would likely be of the highest priority in the coming years.

In the course of preparing this comprehensive plan, the city staff and CPAC conducted an additional update of the street improvement recommendations of the Major Street Plan, so that they would be coordinated with land use recommendations. At the same time the staff and CPAC decided to recommend that the Major Street Plan be renamed the Master Transportation Plan. The Master Transportation Plan includes not only street improvement recommendations, but also recommendations for all other transportation modes.

Many of the improvements and new facilities shown in the Plan are within or adjacent to property that has yet to develop. If these projects become necessary prior to development of the property, the City will work with the property owner to accomplish construction of the facility. If these properties develop prior to the need for a street becoming a priority, the City will expect the developer to accommodate the facility in his plans and to accept responsibility for construction of the street proportional to the impact of the development.

There are several new streets shown on the Plan as “local” streets. The need for these roads will be driven primarily by development of surrounding areas and not by need of the public at large. For this reason, although the City will encourage their construction, they are anticipated to be funded and constructed by private developers as property in the surrounding area is developed.

A full list of proposed road improvement projects, as included in the Master Transportation Plan, can be found in Table 11-1. Table 11-1 also lists an estimated construction schedule for each listed project.

The Master Transportation Plan map, Figure 11-2, shows the locations of these planned road improvements and is provided at the end of this chapter.

**Table 11-1. Road Improvement Recommendations and Schedule  
Master Transportation Plan**

<i><b>Within Five Years</b></i>
<p><b>A. North Main Street</b> from Noll Drive to Charles Street, create center turn lane and remove parking.</p> <p><b>B. Lucy Drive</b> from Evelyn Byrd Avenue to Reservoir Street. Construct a three-lane facility with pedestrian facilities.</p> <p><b>C. Virginia Avenue</b> from West Gay Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Widen to a four-lane facility, remove parking and construct sidewalks.</p> <p><b>D. Country Club Road</b> from Linda Lane to Vine Street. Create a center turn lane.</p> <p><b>E. Linda Lane</b> from East Market Street to Country Club Road. Widen to a five-lane facility with pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p>
<i><b>Within Ten Years</b></i>
<p><b>F. Port Republic Road</b> from Devon Lane to East City Limits. Widen to a four-lane facility and include pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p> <p><b>G. Interstate 81</b> from South City Limits to North City Limits. Widen to six lanes or more and include the reconstruction of Buffalo Drive and additionally reconstruct Exit 251 in Rockingham County. Consider additional access points at Route 704 south of Harrisonburg in Rockingham County and at Old Furnace Road in the city.</p> <p><b>H. Garbers Church Road</b> from West Market Street to South City Limits. Provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities and enhance turning movements.</p> <p><b>I. South Main Street</b> from Route 704 in Rockingham County to Interstate 81(Exit 243). Widen to a four-lane facility with a center turn lane.</p> <p><b>J. Chicago Avenue</b> from Mt. Clinton Pike to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Create a center turn lane along with pedestrian and bicycle improvements.</p> <p><b>K. Chestnut Ridge Drive Extension</b> from current terminus to Stonewall Drive. Construct a 2-lane street providing connection between East Market Street and Reservoir Street.</p> <p><b>L. East Market Street</b> from Cantrell Avenue to East City Limits. Widen to six lanes and provide pedestrian facilities and enhance turning movements at intersections.</p> <p><b>M. Country Club Road</b> from East Market Street to Linda Lane. Create a center turn lane.</p> <p><b>N. Linda Lane Extension</b> from Country Club Road to Smithland Road. Construct a four-lane facility with center turn lane with pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p> <p><b>O. Mount Clinton Pike</b> from proposed Northwest Connector to Virginia Avenue. Widen to a four-lane facility with center turn lane and include pedestrian facilities.</p>

**Table 11-1. Road Improvement Recommendations  
Of the Master Transportation Plan (Continued)**

<i>Within Ten Years (con't)</i>
<p><b>P. Reservoir Street</b> from Cantrell Avenue to East City Limits. Create a center turn lane, include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and enhance traffic flow at intersections.</p> <p><b>Q. Stone Spring Road-Erickson Avenue Connector and Improvements</b> from West City Limits to East City Limits. Construct a four-lane facility connecting the eastern terminus of Erickson Avenue with Stone Spring Road near the intersection of Stone Spring Road and Beery Road. Reconstruct an at-grade railroad crossing at Pear Street. Create pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p>
<i>Within Twenty Years</i>
<p><b>R. North Liberty Street</b> from Edom Road to North City Limits. Create a center turn lane.</p> <p><b>S. Smithland Road</b> from Interstate 81 underpass to Chesapeake &amp; Western Railway Crossing. Widen to a four-lane facility.</p> <p><b>T. Smithland Road-North Main Street Connector Proposed.</b> Construct a new four-lane facility between Vine Street and the intersection of Vine Street and Old Furnace Road through Rockingham County.</p> <p><b>U. Peach Grove Avenue Extension.</b> Construct a four-lane facility between the southern terminus of Peach Grove Avenue at Stone Spring Road and the proposed South Connector.</p>
<i>Beyond Twenty-Five Years</i>
<p><b>V. South Connector Proposed.</b> Construct a new limited-access facility connecting South Main Street at Exit 243 to proposed Southeastern Bypass in Rockingham County.</p> <p><b>W. Washington Street.</b> Make improvements from North Main Street to Liberty Street.</p> <p><b>X. Southwestern Connector Proposed.</b> Construct a new limited-access facility from southern terminus of Garbers Church Road and Interstate 81 Exit 243. Improvements to Garbers Church Road from South High Street (Route 42) to Erickson Avenue.</p> <p><b>Y. Northwest Connector Proposed.</b> Construct a new limited-access facility extending the northern terminus of Garbers Church Road at West Market Street and connecting with Interstate Exit 251 in Rockingham County.</p> <p><b>Z. Country Club Road/Smithland Road Connector.</b> Construct a new 2-lane facility connecting Country Club Road to Smithland Road.</p>



**Table 11-1. Road Improvement Recommendations  
Of the Master Transportation Plan (Continued)**

**AA.** Streets to be constructed by developers.

**BB.** Road projects located in Rockingham County.

### Metropolitan Planning Organization

In May 2002, the U.S. Bureau of Census determined that Harrisonburg and the surrounding area met criteria enabling the designation of an “urbanized area.” This designation entailed that the area had reached a population base of 50,000 or greater. The area that received this designation included Harrisonburg, the Towns of Bridgewater, Dayton, Mount Crawford and a portion of surrounding Rockingham County. Because of the designation, it was deemed that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must be formed to deal with transportation-related issues and to place the decision making process concerning transportation improvements in the hands of the localities, as opposed to being totally in the hands of VDOT.

A policy board, comprised of local elected officials and state and local transportation agency officials, will head the MPO. Assisting the board will be special committees, which will provide both professional advice and relay public input to the board. The board and committees will be responsible for developing a twenty-year, long-range transportation plan. When this plan is completed, it may require changes to be made to the Master Transportation Plan recommended in this comprehensive plan. From the long-range plan, the three-year, short-term Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) will be developed and used for budgeting construction projects. The MPO will assist in developing regional short and long range transportation plans and will oblige Harrisonburg, the towns and County to combine their efforts and look at transportation on a more regional scale.

### HATS

VDOT also previously provided Harrisonburg and the surrounding localities with its own plan for the area, entitled the Harrisonburg Area Transportation Study (HATS). HATS was most recently updated in October of 1999, and will be one of the resources utilized by the MPO to formulate the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

The HATS plan originated under VDOT as the Harrisonburg Transportation Plan to 2010. It was renamed the Harrisonburg Area Transportation Study in 1989, was promoted to the city and county in the years following, and was approved by the City Council in 1996. The 1999 update of HATS was then approved by the city in October of 1999, with the county approving it one month later. The Rockingham County Board of Supervisors reaffirmed its support for HATS in 2003. The study consisted of a map and list of improvements recommended by VDOT, along with their estimated construction costs, that were to occur by the year 2015. The plan gave recommendations for many roadway improvements, but HATS gained most of its notoriety from city and county citizens for its proposal of a Harrisonburg bypass. The HATS map and road improvement recommendations are included in the Plan Background Information Supplement.

## Street Design Issues

In public meetings and in comments from the development community, the issue of street design was raised. Many expressed a concern about what they thought was the excessive width of some local streets, the lack of street system connectivity, the need for accommodations for other modes of travel in street construction (bus pull-offs, sidewalks, bike lanes and paths), and the need for traffic calming measures. The lack of street connectivity was of particular concern; the return of the street grid, modified as needed for environmental and other reasons, was recommended. Establishing a connected system of streets is the responsibility not only of the city, but also of private developers as they construct new neighborhoods and commercial areas. This plan therefore includes strategies for improving the design of streets.

## Mass Transit

Harrisonburg's Transit Department began operation in November 1976 with the purchase of two taxi companies that were operating at a deficit and had planned to discontinue operations. Immediately after this purchase, efforts were made by the Transit Department to coordinate all mass transit operations within the city. The City School System, the Valley Program for Aging Services, Harrisonburg Social Services, the Health Department, and various other organizations participated in this coordination. In May 1977, the City Council approved the purchase of three mini buses to begin a fixed-route system within the city. In October 1978, transit service began, with emphasis on the transportation needs of students and the elderly. The Transit Department also took over the operation of the public school's special education van and a vehicle that was used by the Valley Program for Aging Services.

Today, the Harrisonburg Department of Transportation controls all of the public transportation operations that the city supplies for its residents and visitors. In 2002, total transit ridership was 1,047,320. Services include: fixed-route mass transit buses, school buses, and paratransit operations to serve persons with disabilities (includes wheelchair-accessible buses). The City sold the taxi companies it purchased in 1976, so taxi service is provided by the private sector.

Funding for these services is provided by the City of Harrisonburg, James Madison University (JMU), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the US Department of Transportation. The bus service has become an integral service to JMU, its students and staff, and helps alleviate much additional traffic congestion. In the past few years, however, concerns have arisen over an increase in the number of commuter student parking permits issued by the University, encouraging off campus students to drive to campus in place of utilizing the transit buses. From 2001 to 2002, a 20% decrease in transit ridership by JMU was experienced, leading to an increase in congestion on roadways between off campus apartment complexes and the University.

## Pedestrian Trails and Sidewalks

The Harrisonburg Department of Public Works maintains all public sidewalks within the city limits. The department is responsible for all sidewalks parallel to the street that are located on the street right-of-way. Crews evaluate the sidewalks on an annual basis and determine levels of priority for repair. Sidewalk maintenance does not include snow or ice removal, as this responsibility is left to the adjacent property owners. Property owners are also responsible for removal of any obstructions in accordance with the city ordinance (such as low-hanging tree limbs).

As traffic levels and associated congestion increase within the city, so does the need for a more encompassing system of pedestrian walkways. Though the Harrisonburg Department of Public Works presently maintains approximately 42 miles of sidewalk within the city limits, opportunities for pedestrian traffic remain limited, and this deficiency is something many residents of the city would like to see remedied. According to the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan, walking trails are one of the most requested improvements those polled within the city would like to see made. Improving pedestrian facilities was also the subject of a large portion of public comments made regarding the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan.

Better sidewalks or trails placed between high-density residences and points of common destination would help alleviate some of the growing traffic numbers throughout the city. In particular, high use could be expected of trails or sidewalks connecting the apartment complexes along Port Republic Road and Neff Avenue with points of destination such as JMU and the Valley Mall. Citizens are also interested in having sidewalks installed leading to parks and schools.

#### Blacks Run Greenway Plan

Blacks Run is a six-mile-long stream that runs through the city, connecting neighborhoods in the north and south with downtown businesses, parks, and housing. Friends of Blacks Run Greenway (FBRG), a public-private organization composed of city and county citizens, city staff, and representatives from businesses and civic organizations, formed in the fall of 2000 and is leading the effort to build a greenway along the stream's path, including the preparation of a Blacks Run Greenway Plan. The greenway incorporates a walking/bike trail. The Blacks Run Greenway Plan is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference. The primary trails of the Black Run Greenway Plan are included on the Master Transportation Plan Map.

#### Rail-Trail Greenway

As discussed later in this chapter in the section on rail, the city has long desired the movement of a section of one Norfolk Southern rail line from its alignment through the city to a new alignment north of the city in Rockingham County. This rail right-of-way travels through the JMU campus and extends from there into the northeast quadrant of the city. Abandonment of this rail line could allow the creation of a rail-trail greenway within the right-of-way. The city has begun talks with Norfolk Southern about the feasibility of this proposal. The Master Transportation Plan Map shows the alignment of this recommended new greenway.

#### Bikeways

Harrisonburg adopted its first Bicycle Plan in 1994. By generating an awareness of bicycling issues, the plan prompted the city to include bike lanes in the design and construction of a new street, Neff Avenue. It also promoted awareness of funding mechanisms the city has since used to obtain grant funds for changes to an existing roadway, Port Republic Road. In 1999, the Harrisonburg Planning Commission recognized the need for the plan to be reviewed and updated. The updated plan focused on areas within the city limits (the original also covered Rockingham County), and created a revised list of priorities for bicycle lanes and pathways.

The purpose of the Harrisonburg Bicycle Plan is to improve bicycle transportation within the city through public-private partnerships, grant opportunities, and redevelopment/expansion projects. The goal is to create and maintain a viable bicycle transportation network with safe and convenient facilities. The city recognizes the need to encourage bicycle travel, as bicycle use reduces traffic congestion, contributes to cleaner air, conserves energy, promotes physical fitness, and results in a more pleasant atmosphere.

The updated Bicycle Plan, as adopted by the Harrisonburg City Council on February 8, 2000, is incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan. Its recommendations are shown on the Master Transportation Plan Map.

### Railroads

Harrisonburg is served by three railroad companies: the Norfolk and Western Railway, part of the Norfolk Southern Corporation, which travels north-south and provides local freight service to Grottoes and Elkton on a daily and requested basis; the Chesapeake Western Railway, which supplies local freight service to Harrisonburg and Elkton; and the Southern Railway, also part of the Norfolk Southern Corporation, which provides daily service to Harrisonburg and the Towns of Broadway and Timberville. There is no passenger rail service to Harrisonburg.

There is desire to move a section of one Norfolk Southern rail line that currently traverses through the James Madison campus, as this move would increase safety on campus and decrease traffic associated with railroad crossings in the affected areas. Possible alignments that would redirect this line through Rockingham County have been proposed and are currently being considered and discussed with the county and Norfolk Southern.

Another source of railroad-related concern among the population of Harrisonburg lies with the underpass on Erickson Avenue, between South High Street and Pear Street on the southwest side of the city. This underpass was constructed with a single lane of roadway below the railroad, creating a “bottleneck”. This underpass will be reconstructed as an at-grade crossing when Erickson Avenue is extended as a four-lane roadway between Pear Street and Stone Spring Road, as the Master Transportation Plan recommends to provide an east-west connection in this area.

### Air Transportation

The Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport is located in Weyers Cave, about 10 miles south of the City of Harrisonburg. The airport supplies flights to and from the Pittsburgh hub of US Airways. Airport managers are negotiating with other commercial carriers to provide additional service. In the past, there has not been public transportation, other than cabs, to link the city with the airport. The airport has been awarded a U.S. Department of Transportation grant, however, to create ground shuttle service. The grant will accommodate shuttles to both Harrisonburg and Staunton.

### Interstate System

Harrisonburg is centrally located within the Shenandoah Valley and is bisected by Interstate 81, which serves as the major north-south transportation corridor along the Appalachian mountain range between New York and Tennessee. The interstate is heavily utilized by the trucking industry and serves as the primary means of inter-city travel within Harrisonburg. The portion of I-81 located within the City's boundaries carries approximately 47,000 vehicles per day.

As reflected in the City's Major Transportation Plan, VDOT is considering two different proposals to privately fund I-81's expansion to either 6 or 8 lanes. These changes would include reconfiguring the two northern most interchanges and replacing the interchange at Pleasant Valley Road, located just inside the City's southern limits.

### Citizen Involvement in Transportation Planning

In addition to the public input solicited during updates to the Comprehensive Plan and the Master Transportation Plan, there are other ways for citizens to become involved in Transportation Planning. The City's appointed Transportation Safety Commission's goal is to study transportation safety issue and make recommendations to improve areas of noted concern.

Another effort to involve citizens and increase safety is the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The goal of this program, established in 2001, is to facilitate communication between neighborhood residents and the City. A neighborhood, upon securing signatures from 75% its residents, may present their traffic concerns to the City for study and recommendation. Depending on the results of the study, recommendations may include implementation of temporary or permanent traffic calming measures.

### **Transportation Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 9. To develop a safe and convenient transportation system serving all modes of travel, such as, automobile, pedestrian, bicycle and transit.

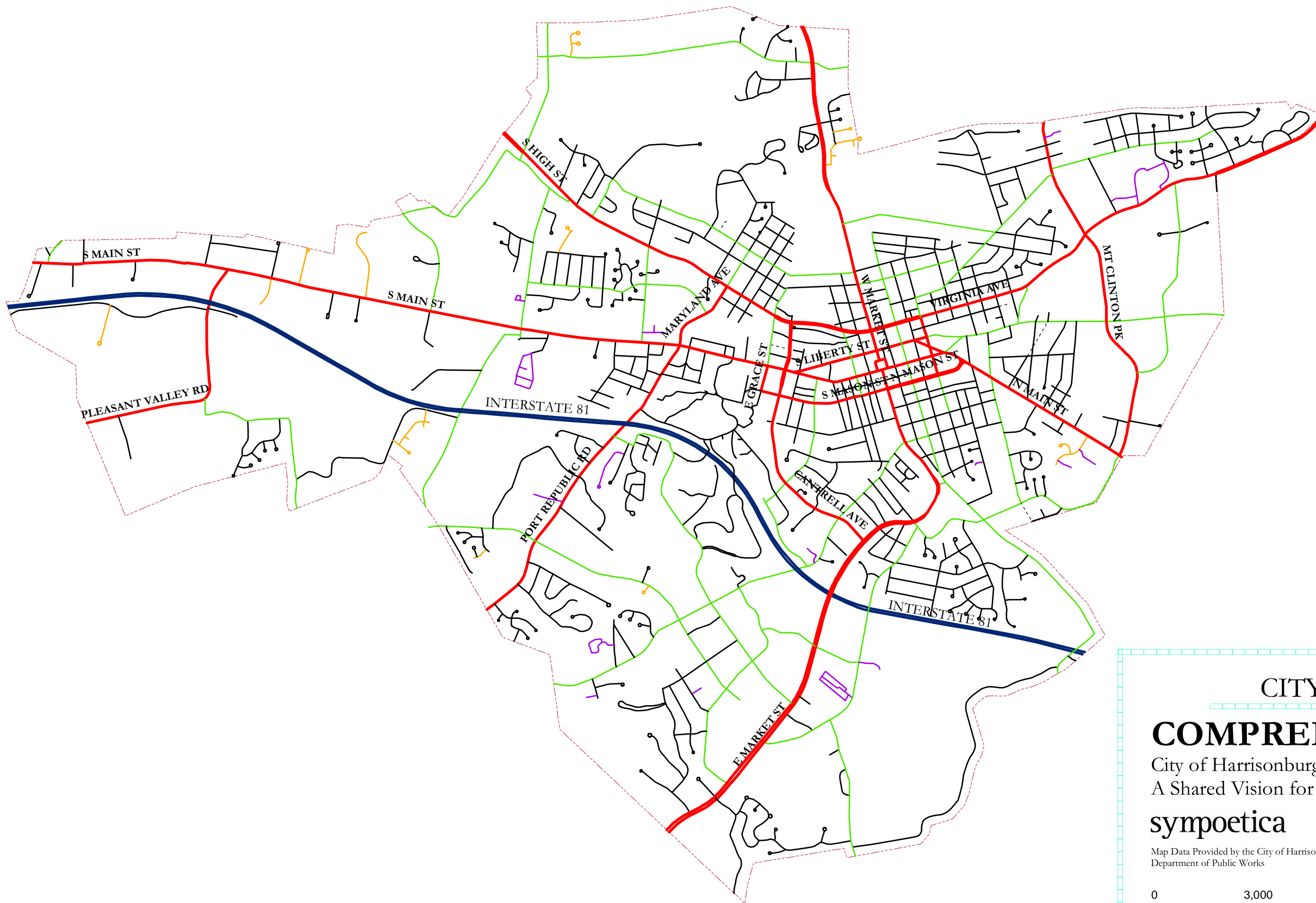
Objective 9.1 To adopt, update regularly and implement a City Master Transportation Plan of needed road improvements that serves existing and future land uses and is coordinated with road improvement plans of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and Rockingham County.

- Strategy 9.1.1 To work with Rockingham County and VDOT to prepare a regional transportation plan for the MPO.
- Strategy 9.1.2 To seek inclusion of the road improvements recommended in the City Master Transportation Plan in the MPO regional transportation plan and to coordinate the two plans.
- Strategy 9.1.3 To seek developer participation in completing the street network as shown on the City Master Transportation Plan.
- Strategy 9.1.4 To expand the City Master Transportation Plan to include design standards for streets that reduce traffic congestion within the transportation system while accommodating all transportation modes. Standards should be included both for streets constructed by the city and those by the private sector specifying appropriate:
- interconnectivity of the street system
  - street widths adequate to handle projected traffic volumes based on traffic impact analyses while avoiding excessive pavement widths
  - pull-off areas for buses on collector and arterial streets
  - bicycle facilities.
  - sidewalk widths and location within the street right-of-way.
- Strategy 9.1.5 To include applicable standards developed under Strategy 9.1.4 in the Subdivision Ordinance and Design and Construction Standards Manual, as appropriate.
- Objective 9.2 To promote bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation.
- Strategy 9.2.1 To implement the Harrisonburg Bicycle Plan and bicycle elements of the Blacks Run Greenway Plan as shown on the City Master Transportation Plan.
- Strategy 9.2.2 To seek conversion of the eastern most line of the Norfolk Southern system in Harrisonburg to a rail-trail as shown on the City Master Transportation Plan.
- Strategy 9.2.3 To consider requiring private developers to implement bikeway improvements in the City Master Transportation Plan that directly serve their property.
- Objective 9.3 To develop a city sidewalk and walking trail construction plan and program for both existing developed areas and new development.
- Strategy 9.3.1 To prepare a comprehensive pedestrian facilities master plan that sets forth the city's sidewalk and pedestrian trail policies and standards and recommends needed improvements to the city sidewalk and trail system.
- Strategy 9.3.2 In the interim until the comprehensive pedestrian facilities master plan is developed, to review the following areas and make recommendations for sidewalk and trail improvements:
- Areas within one quarter mile of schools/universities
  - Areas within one quarter mile of parks

- Areas within one quarter mile of public facilities.
  - Strategy 9.3.3 To review the city's sidewalk construction requirements in the Design and Construction Standards Manual to consider requiring all development and redevelopment projects to provide desired sidewalks whether or not those projects are located on an existing road or involve new road construction
  - Strategy 9.3.4 To continue to ensure that all new sidewalks and sidewalk repairs meet ADA accessibility standards.
  - Strategy 9.3.5 To expand the annual allocation of funds for sidewalk and trail improvements in the capital improvements program.
- Objective 9.4 To promote and seek to increase transit ridership.
  - Strategy 9.4.1 To continue to work with JMU and EMU to increase transit use by students, faculty and staff.
  - Strategy 9.4.2 To promote bus, bike or walk to work and school days.
  - Strategy 9.4.3 To work with the City School Board to promote school buses, walking or bicycling as the primary forms of transportation to school rather than private vehicles.
  - Strategy 9.4.4 To continue to revise and improve city bus routes and schedules to serve residential areas and major destinations (universities, major employment sites, shopping centers, downtown).
  - Strategy 9.4.5 To work with local employers to provide incentives to employees to travel to work by bus, bicycle or walking.
  - Strategy 9.4.6 To seek improvement of transit and paratransit services for the elderly and handicapped.
  - Strategy 9.4.7 To work with Rockingham County to expand existing and provide new transit routes from county growth areas to the City.
  - Strategy 9.4.8 To promote development of a shuttle service from the city to the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport at Weyers Cave.
  - Strategy 9.4.9 To promote the extension of passenger rail service to Harrisonburg and various destinations.
- Objective 9.5 To assess and seek to mitigate and improve the transportation impacts of both public and private development and redevelopment projects.
  - Strategy 9.5.1 To require traffic impact studies with all rezoning and special use permit applications proposing development of sufficient size to create a significant traffic impact. Such studies should include:
    - Impacts of project vehicular traffic on the road network
    - Impacts of the project on pedestrian and bicycle circulation and transit use
    - Mitigation measures that would lessen adverse impacts and maintain a desired level of service of C or better on nearby roadway links and intersections

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mitigation measures that would encourage transit, pedestrian and bicycle use</li> </ul>
Strategy 9.5.2	To perform similar traffic impact studies for public facilities projects.
Strategy 9.5.3	To review Zoning Ordinance parking requirements for multifamily projects to determine their adequacy. Consideration in this review should be given not only to increasing required parking, but also to measures to reduce parking demand.
Objective 9.6	To reduce automobile trips through innovative means.
Strategy 9.6.1	To promote mixed use neighborhoods as recommended by the Land Use Guide so that residents of these neighborhoods can easily walk, ride a bicycle, or take transit to work, shopping, school, place of worship, and recreation.
Strategy 9.6.2	To expand opportunities for reductions in parking requirements for commercial and residential projects designed to take advantage of transit and for mixed use developments where shared parking is feasible.
Strategy 9.6.3	To promote carpooling through incentive programs, such as, an “emergency ride home” program.
Objective 9.7	To improve the safety of all modes of travel.
Strategy 9.7.1	To incorporate safety considerations for all travel modes (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit) in the design of roadways.
Strategy 9.7.2	To incorporate traffic calming measures in neighborhoods, near schools and universities, and other appropriate areas to discourage speeding and improve pedestrian safety.
Strategy 9.7.3	To relocate the eastern most line of the Norfolk Southern system in Harrisonburg to a location outside the city as shown on the Master Transportation Plan so as to remove conflicts between rail traffic and vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic in this area.





**Legend**

- ARTERIAL STREET
- INTERSTATE
- COLLECTOR STREET
- LOCAL STREET
- NOT CURRENTLY ACCEPTED
- PRIVATE STREET
- PAPER STREET
- CITYLIMITS

CITY STREET NETWORK

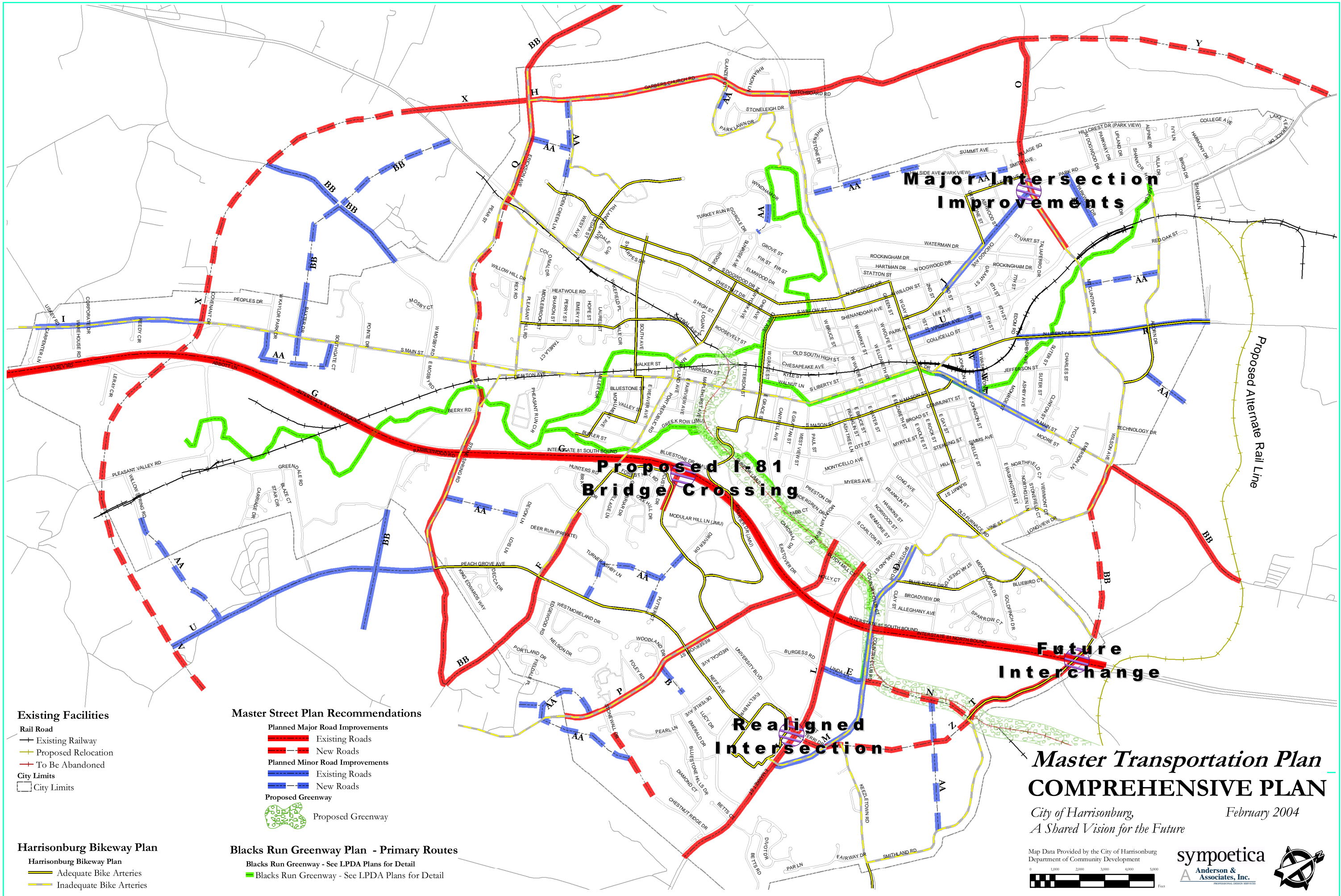
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

City of Harrisonburg, February 2004  
A Shared Vision for the Future

sympoetica

Map Data Provided by the City of Harrisonburg  
Department of Public Works

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## **Chapter 12            Community Facilities, Services, Safety & Health**

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the health, safety and welfare issues to which the city must attend. Basic city services and the facilities that support them are often taken for granted by citizens, but are important to take into account when planning the city's future. The City of Harrisonburg has made large capital investments to create a safe and reliable water supply and a wastewater treatment system that are cost effective and environmentally sound. The city has cooperated with Rockingham County to develop a new landfill and is currently updating its Resource Recovery Facility. These efforts as well as programs to encourage recycling ensure that solid waste is handled responsibly. The city is also working on developing and implementing a comprehensive stormwater management program.

Safety and health issues are also addressed here through recommendations for new police and fire facilities and for cooperative programs with local health organizations to inform citizens of health programs and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

### **Background**

#### **Water Supply**

The City of Harrisonburg strives to meet its responsibility in providing dependable and reliable water service to its citizens. In doing so, the city owns, operates, and maintains a complete water system from source to customer. Information regarding the city's current water system and plans for meeting future water demand is described in detail in the Plan Background Implementation Supplement and is summarized below.

**Water Use:** City water use for calendar year 2002 averaged a total of 6.94 million gallons per day (MGD). It is important to note that the city employed water use restrictions in the early part of 2002 due to a continuation of previous drought conditions. Accordingly, water use for 2002 may not fully reflect current water use for normal weather conditions. The water use figure is based on water service to the 5,720 acres of developed land within the city. Additional water use will occur as the undeveloped land within the city is built-out. Accordingly, the water use increase potential was projected based on the build-out of the city for each water user category using historical usage rates and maximum anticipated usage rates. Based on historical usage rates, the city at build-out could use an additional 3.77 MGD. At the maximum anticipated usage rate, the additional water usage would 7.86 MGD. Table 12-1 totals the current water usage and projected future water usage based on historical and maximum rates and an average of the two. Projected water usage ranges from 10.72 to 14.72 MGD with an average of 12.77 MGD.

**Table 12-1. Harrisonburg Total Projected Water Use at Build-out**

<b>Water User</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Acres (Ac)<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>MGD (his)</b>	<b>MGD (max)</b>	<b>MGD (avg)</b>
Residential	R1, R2, R2C, R-P, UR	4,271	2.29	3.40	2.85
Commercial	R3, R3C, R4, B1, B2, B2C	3,190	3.63	5.08	4.36
Industrial <sup>(2)</sup>	M1, MITECH, M1C	2,036	1.59	3.00	2.30
Institutional	R3INST, B2INST	201	0.53	0.54	0.54
Municipal			0.07	0.08	0.08
Rural <sup>(2)</sup>			0.78	0.79	0.78
County Contract			0.40	0.40	0.40
WTP Backwash			0.29	0.36	0.32
System Loss			1.14	1.14	1.14
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,698</b>	<b>10.72</b>	<b>14.72</b>	<b>12.77</b>

Source: Harrisonburg Water System Capacity Evaluation, Director of Public Utilities, March 2003

**NOTES:**

(1) Acreage data is July 2002.

(2) Includes adjusted (post 2002) rural and industrial rates as cited in Table 1.

**Sources of water:** Currently, two sources are available for supplying the city with potable water. These sources consist of surface and/or impoundment withdrawals from the North River and Rawley Springs. A major project is now underway to construct a raw water supply line from the South Fork of the Shenandoah River to the City's Water Treatment Plant (WTP). This project, once completed, will add another significant source to the city's water supply. The current available capacity of the city's water supply sources (excluding Silver Lake, a limited resource for only emergency use) is approximately 11.6 MGD. Current available source capacity anticipated during drought conditions is approximately 9.5 MGD.

After a new Rawley Springs water supply line and the Shenandoah River source are brought online, the future long term available capacity of the City's water supply sources (again excluding Silver Lake) will be 15.0 MGD through a variety of source options. With justification of demand under permit review, the Shenandoah River could possibly provide for growth in excess of 15.0 MGD.

**Treatment:** Generally, the city's water supply quality is good and treated water meets or exceeds State regulatory drinking water standards. The current capacity of the city's Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is 10.0 MGD. In order to meet future water use demands, the Harrisonburg Department of Public Utilities has construction contract arrangements in place to expand the WTP to 15.0 MGD. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2004.

Table 12-2 provides a summary of the city's major water system components and a comparison with current and future system demands.

**Table 12-2. Harrisonburg Water System Summary**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Current Status (MGD)</b>	<b>Future Status (MGD)</b>
Water Use (demand)	6.94 <sup>(1)</sup>	12.77 <sup>(2)</sup>
Treatment Capacity <sup>(3)</sup>	8.30 to 10.00	12.50 to 15.00
Source Capacity (normal)	11.60	19.60 MGD
Source Capacity (drought)	9.50	15.00

**NOTES:**

- (1) 2002 water use.
- (2) Projected average water use. Projected water use using historical usage rates is 10.72 MGD. Projected water use using maximum usage rates is 14.72 MGD.
- (3) Although the current and future rated capacities of the WTP are 10.00 MGD and 15.00 MGD, respectively, the lower capacities listed above have been added to reflect the consistent average daily output that is expected. The added capacity afforded by the higher figures is used to supply daily peak demands when required and to supplement storage in the system.

As shown above, the city's current water system is capable of meeting or exceeding current system demands. Additionally, once construction of the WTP expansion, Shenandoah raw water supply line, and replacement of the Rawley Springs raw water supply line are completed, the city's improved water system will be capable of meeting or exceeding future system demands.

**Storage and Distribution System:** Currently, the city has a total treated water storage capacity of 28.42 million gallons (MG). This storage capacity is provided by 10 storage facilities spread across 5 separate pressure zones (three primary pressure zones and two secondary pressure zones). The city owns, operates, and maintains nearly 200 miles of water distribution pipes ranging in size from 1-inch diameter to 18-inch diameter. Construction projects involving both expansions and replacements are regularly undertaken to improve water service to city customers. Most recently, water service was extended to citizens in the Smithland Road area. The Department of Public Utilities identifies four areas of weakness in the current storage and distribution system:

- A significant volume of exposed treated water in the city's uncovered distribution system reservoirs
- Need for additional storage and booster pump station in the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Pressure Zone
- Need to upgrade the booster pump station and storage tank in the Parkview Pressure Zone
- Need for upgrading of transmission pipe and for additional storage capacity in the Dale Enterprise Pressure Zone (Coopers Mountain Area).

### Wastewater Treatment

A major responsibility of the city government is to provide a dependable and reliable wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment system. Wastewater treatment for the city is provided by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority (HRRSA).

**Sewer Use:** City sewer use for calendar year 2002 averaged a total of 5.01 million gallons per day (MGD). It is important to note that drought conditions existed throughout most of 2002. This figure does not fully reflect typical average discharges or discharges experienced during



non-drought years. Records from the last recent non-drought or “wet” year (1998) indicate that the city discharged 8.04 MGD of sewage flow to the HRRSA facility. Predictably, non-drought or “wet” years typically result in increased discharges to the treatment plant primarily due to the impacts of inflow and infiltration (I/I). Historically, the city has incurred from 0.40 MGD to 3.80 MGD of I/I into its collection system.

The current sewer use figure is based on sewer service to the 5,720 acres of developed land within the city. Additional sewer use will occur in the undeveloped land within the city as build-out of this land continues. At the historical sewer usage rate the additional usage added at city build-out is projected to be 4.65 MGD. The maximum projected additional sewer usage is 8.32 MGD. Table 12-3 totals the current sewer usage and projected future sewer usage based on historical and maximum rates and an average of the two. Projected water usage ranges from 9.26 to 12.93 MGD with an average of 11.11 MGD.

**Table 12-3. Harrisonburg Total Projected Sewer Use at Build-out**

<b>Sewer User</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Acres (Ac)<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>MGD (his)</b>	<b>MGD (max)</b>	<b>MGD (avg)</b>
Residential	R1, R2, R2C, R-P, UR	4,271	2.06	3.09	2.58
Commercial	R3, R3C, R4, B1, B2, B2C	3,190	3.26	4.60	3.93
Industrial <sup>(2)</sup>	M1, M1TECH, M1C	2,036	1.39	2.66	2.03
Institutional	R3INST, B2INST	201	0.48	0.49	0.49
Municipal			0.05	0.06	0.06
Rural <sup>(2)</sup>			0.02	0.03	0.02
Inflow/Infiltration			2.00	2.00	2.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,698</b>	<b>9.26</b>	<b>12.93</b>	<b>11.11</b>

Source: Harrisonburg Sewer System Capacity Evaluation, Director of Public Utilities, March 2003

**NOTES:**

- (1) Acreage data is July 2002.
- (2) Includes adjusted (post 2002) rural and industrial rates.

**Treatment:** All sewage from customers within the city who are connected to the public wastewater collection system is conveyed to the HRRSA treatment facility in Mount Crawford, Virginia. This modern facility is a technologically advanced wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that was recently improved to include biological nutrient removal (BNR) for meeting the stringent requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

The HRRSA WWTP has a current capacity of 16.0 MGD and treats sewage from the City of Harrisonburg, portions of Rockingham County, and the Towns of Bridgewater, Mount Crawford, and Dayton. Of the current 16.0 MGD capacity, 10.65 MGD is specifically allocated to the City of Harrisonburg. The city is currently well below its treatment capacity allocation. In addition, as shown on Table 12-3, the city will have ample capacity through the projected build-out of the undeveloped portions of the city if historical usage rates hold true. Additional capacity allocation and/or HRRSA facility expansion will be required if usage rates higher than the historical trend are experienced.

**Collection:** Currently, the city owns, operates, and maintains approximately 175 miles of wastewater collection pipes ranging in size from 3-inch diameter to 36-inch diameter. Construction projects involving both expansions and replacements are regularly undertaken to improve sanitary sewer service to city customers. To aid in maintaining its wastewater collection system, the city employs an aggressive inflow and infiltration (I/I) abatement program. City forces regularly inspect the sewers, identify problems, and implement corrective actions on a subsection by subsection basis. As a proactive measure for pending regulations involving sanitary sewer Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance (CMOM), the city has recently undertaken a capacity evaluation of its primary interceptors. Results from the evaluation will be used to outline future Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects for upgrading system capacities, where necessary.

### Stormwater Management

**System Description:** Most of the storm water runoff from the city discharges into the Blacks Run watershed. The Sunset Heights Branch watershed receives storm water runoff from the western portion of the city. Both watersheds discharge into Cooks Creek in southern Rockingham County. A loosely connected network of storm water pipes, culverts, inlets, and drainage swales are located throughout the city for providing drainage to low-lying and flood prone areas. According to a 1998 Storm Water Action Plan prepared for the city, the city has a long history of storm water related problems. That plan identified more than 30 different storm water problem areas scattered throughout the city.

**Existing Policies and Programs:** The city's Department of Planning and Community Development is responsible for review, approval, and enforcement of all new storm drainage designs associated with new developments. The policy and program tools the city uses in this endeavor consist of specific requirements set forth in the State's Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Handbook, the city's Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM), and the city's Zoning Ordinances with respect to flood plain issues. The city's Department of Public Works is responsible for the physical aspects of operating and maintaining the city's existing storm water system. Principally, this effort involves the routine inspection, cleaning, and maintenance associated with pipes, culverts, inlets, and selected drainage swales as well as making any structural repairs, modifications, or improvements that may be required.

**Future Policies and Programs:** The most immediate and visible future storm water regulation impacting the City of Harrisonburg involves the EPA's recently promulgated Phase II storm water regulations. These regulations focus on stormwater quality, as opposed to quantity. In response to these regulations, the city has submitted its Virginia Pollution Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) General Permit Registration Statement for Storm Water Discharges: Small MS4s to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ). This statement (dated March 7, 2003) is the first step required for compliance with the regulations. The Phase II storm water regulations contain six minimum control measures that are to be implemented by the permitted MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system). The City of Harrisonburg's registration statement described above outlines the city's approach to each of these control measures:

1. Public Education and Outreach on Storm Water Impacts
2. Public Involvement/Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
5. Post Construction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

### Solid Waste Management

The City of Harrisonburg's Department of Public Works handles solid waste management for the city. Its integrated program of collection, recycling, resource recovery, landfilling and education is described in detail in the *City of Harrisonburg Solid Waste Management Plan*, dated June 25, 2002.

**Collection:** Harrisonburg operates a collection program for residential and some commercial waste within the city. Trash collection is available to all single family dwelling units. Because the city does not have equipment to handle dumpsters, service to businesses and apartment complexes is limited. The Solid Waste Management Plan estimates a per capita solid waste generation rate of 4.3 pounds per day. This figure excludes industrial waste and construction debris.

**Recycling:** The city offers a curbside recycling program, participation in which is voluntary. As of December 2000, the program served approximately 11,000 – 12,000 out of a possible 15,669 households, about 75%. To encourage participation, the City allows participants to co-mingle recyclables. The city sorts these household materials as well as materials collected from participating businesses, institutions and industries and recycles them. The city is currently meeting the State mandated recycling rate of 25%. While the waste generation rate is 4.3 pounds per capita per day, the daily per capita disposal rate is 3.2 pounds.

**Resource Recovery and Incineration:** Harrisonburg operates a 100-ton capacity resource recovery facility located on Driver Drive within the James Madison University campus. This facility burns mostly commercial and residential solid waste from both the city and county to produce steam. The steam is used in several ways. It is provided to James Madison University's CISAT campus for heating. It is used to steam power chillers that provide cooling for CISAT. It also steam powers generators to produce electricity used by HEC during periods of peak demand.

The resource recovery plant was built in 1982 and is coming to the end of its useful life. The city plans to rebuild the plant completely in 2003. The new plant will have double the capacity, at 200 tons per day, and will be fitted with state-of-the-art pollution control equipment.

A major reason for operating the resource recovery plant is to reduce the volume and mass of the solid waste stream. 100 tons of waste is converted to approximately 17 tons of ash, significantly reducing the amount of solid waste deposited in the landfill and lengthening the landfill's life span.



**Disposal in the Sanitary Landfill:** The City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County share use of the sanitary landfill, which is operated by the county and is located on Grassy Creek Road. Both the city and county contribute to the operational cost of the landfill. If recycling levels are maintained and if the resource recovery facility is expanded to a 200-ton-per-day capacity, this landfill can be expected to last for about 50 years. The previous landfill located on Ramblewood Road was closed in the mid-1990s. It is currently being monitored according to a closure plan approved by DEQ.

**Education:** The City promotes source reduction, reuse, and recycling of solid waste to the general public and in the schools. Citizens can access the City's recycling center to ask questions about the recycling program. Brochures and flyers are made available in City buildings and through a number of businesses. The Department of Public Works offers programs in the schools to discourage littering and to promote recycling. Harrisonburg has also adopted the Virginia Department of Transportation's Adopt-a-Highway Program under the title "Adopt-a-Street." As of January 2001, various groups had adopted approximately 50 miles of City streets for regular litter pick-up.

### Public Safety

**Police Department:** The following mission statement captures the overall goals and operational objectives of the Harrisonburg Police Department very effectively:

The mission is to "preserve the public peace and order, to protect life and property and to enforce the laws of the United States, Virginia and the City of Harrisonburg."

The Police Department performs the following functions:

- Provides police presence and availability throughout the city on a 24-hour basis
- Responds to reports of criminal events or requests for police service in a timely manner
- Investigates criminal events or potential criminal events by identifying, apprehending and providing evidence and testimony.
- Maintains responsive contact and communications with victims of crime
- Ensures the orderly and safe flow of traffic and investigate motor vehicle accidents
- Encourages community compliance with laws and participation in public safety through crime prevention and education program, community relations activities and in setting examples for the public to follow
- Resolves public or domestic disputes to avoid escalation to violence
- Provides specialized police presence in the public parks and recreation areas
- Develops and maintain pro-active programs directed at crime prevention
- Provides personal services and programs directed at crime prevention among the youth
- Provides a formalized process in order that citizens and police can work together effectively
- Provides community services to the public that aid in accomplishing the police mission

The Department now has five police facilities:

- the Headquarters building next to the jail on South Liberty Street
- four unmanned satellite substations:
  - on Mosby Road
  - at the old Simms School
  - at Valley Mall
  - at the Cloverleaf Shopping Center

The city pays 50% of the cost of administering the courts and the Regional Jail, which is managed by the County Sheriff. The city Police Department has a close working relationship with the county Sheriff's office. In addition to sharing the courts and jail, the city and county share the firing range, located near the landfill, just outside the city limits. The jail will need to be expanded within a few years and has the potential of expanding on the property now housing the city Police Department Headquarters.

The Police Department is now headquartered in the old creamery building, which is not a modern, efficient space for police operations. However, the Department plans to move to the Harrison Plaza building in late 2004. Officials estimate that this new location should provide sufficient space for the next 15 years. A new substation in the northwest area of the city would be helpful to the Department to provide efficient response to all neighborhoods.

**Fire Department:** The Harrisonburg Fire Department's formal mission statement is as follows:

"The mission of the Harrisonburg Fire Department is to serve the public in protecting them from loss of life and damage to property through Fire Prevention and Fire Suppression activities, and to perform such other humanitarian actions as may be necessary to serve our citizens."

The primary functions of this department's mission are:

- To prevent fire through fair and equal Code Enforcement
- To save lives and suppress fire through the most efficient Combat Tactics
- To be fiscally accountable to the citizens of Harrisonburg
- To provide economical and dependable service to our citizens
- To provide for the professional development and physical fitness of all personnel
- To serve as the city's first line of defense against any type of natural or manmade disaster

#### Existing Facilities and Services

The Fire Department has four Fire Stations and three other support facilities:

- #1 at 80 Maryland Avenue (2 companies and a ladder tower)
- #2 at 380 Pleasant Valley Road
- #3 at 299 Lucy Drive
- #4 at 210 East Rock Street
- Administration offices are 101 North Main Street (Harrison Plaza)
- Emergency Operations Center at Harrison Plaza
- Training Center located at the City shop on Mosby Road

Typical Fire Department response times are three and a half to four and a half minutes, although the Park View area has longer response times (5 and 1/2 to 6 and 1/2 minutes). A new Fire Station (#5) is planned in the Parkview area with construction to begin in 2004-2005. A site under consideration is the former VDOT facility site at Waterman/Chicago Avenues.

Once Station #5 is built, the Department will not need any more stations, but would instead focus on adding more people per station to achieve quicker and stronger responses. (New trucks will also be needed to provide operational capability to the new station). While the current standard of three people per piece of equipment is a good standard, four people per piece of equipment would provide a higher and more desirable level of service. With that higher standard, less equipment would be required per fire event, thereby increasing traffic safety (fewer trucks on the street) as well as site safety for the firefighters (more people on site for mutual protection).

**Rescue Squad:** The Rescue Squad, an all-volunteer organization, is an independent, non-profit corporation that contracts to the city for services, but has a very close and cooperative working relationship with the city. The Rescue Squad and the city entered into an arrangement in which the city provided \$1.6 million of funding for the construction of a new Rescue Squad building on a site purchased by the Rescue Squad on Reservoir Street. The squad moved into this new facility in September 2003.

### **Community Facilities Services, Safety and Health Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 10. To support a vital city with community facilities, infrastructure and services that are efficient, cost-effective and conserving of resources.

Objective 10.1 To continue to provide high quality public water service.

Strategy 10.1.1 To construct needed water supply, treatment, storage, and pressure improvements, including:

- Upgrade of raw water supply and treatment capacity to 15.0 MGD
- Covering of open distribution system reservoirs
- Additional storage and booster pump station in the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Pressure Zone
- Storage tank and upgrade of booster pump station in the Parkview Pressure Zone
- Additional storage and upgrade of transmission pipe in the Dale Enterprise Pressure Zone

Strategy 10.1.2 To continue the development of operation and maintenance programs that emphasize repair, protection, ISO fire flow delivery, system reliability, water quality, and water loss reduction.

Objective 10.2      To continue to provide dependable, environmentally sound, sanitary sewer service.

- Strategy 10.2.1    To continue the city's wastewater system repair and maintenance programs that emphasize repair, preventive action, and reliability.
- Strategy 10.2.2    To continue the city's abatement program addressing infiltration and inflow to the wastewater collection system.
- Strategy 10.2.3    To continue the city's interceptor improvement program.
- Strategy 10.2.4    To continue the support of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority to meet voluntary and other goals for nutrient reduction to the Chesapeake Bay.

Objective 10.3      To design and implement Phase II stormwater management program improvements, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, in order to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.

- Strategy 10.3.1    To develop and implement a public education and outreach program regarding the impacts of storm water discharges on streams.
- Strategy 10.3.2    To encourage citizen participation and involvement in all aspects of the city's storm water management program.
- Strategy 10.3.3    To detect and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm water system.
- Strategy 10.3.4    To continue and enhance enforcement of the city's erosion and sediment control program.
- Strategy 10.3.5    To develop a program and ordinance to require storm water quality improvements in new and redevelopment construction.
- Strategy 10.3.6    To maintain and improve programs to prevent pollution and practice good housekeeping in municipal operations.
- Strategy 10.3.7    To work with Rockingham County to ensure a regional approach to storm water quantity and quality control measures. Sufficient funding will need to be secured to establish this new program.

Objective 10.4      To continue an integrated approach for handling and disposal of solid waste.

- Strategy 10.4.1    To promote recycling through:
  - Continued and expanded public education campaigns
  - Adoption of regulations requiring businesses to sort their recyclable solid waste and make it available for collection
  - Giving city purchasing preference to recycled paper
- Strategy 10.4.2    To study the incoming solid waste stream in more detail so as to develop cost-effective waste collection and disposal programs.
- Strategy 10.4.3    To adopt reduction, reuse and recycling reporting legislation.
- Strategy 10.4.4    To maintain the cooperative agreement with Rockingham County in sharing the county landfill and resource recovery plant.

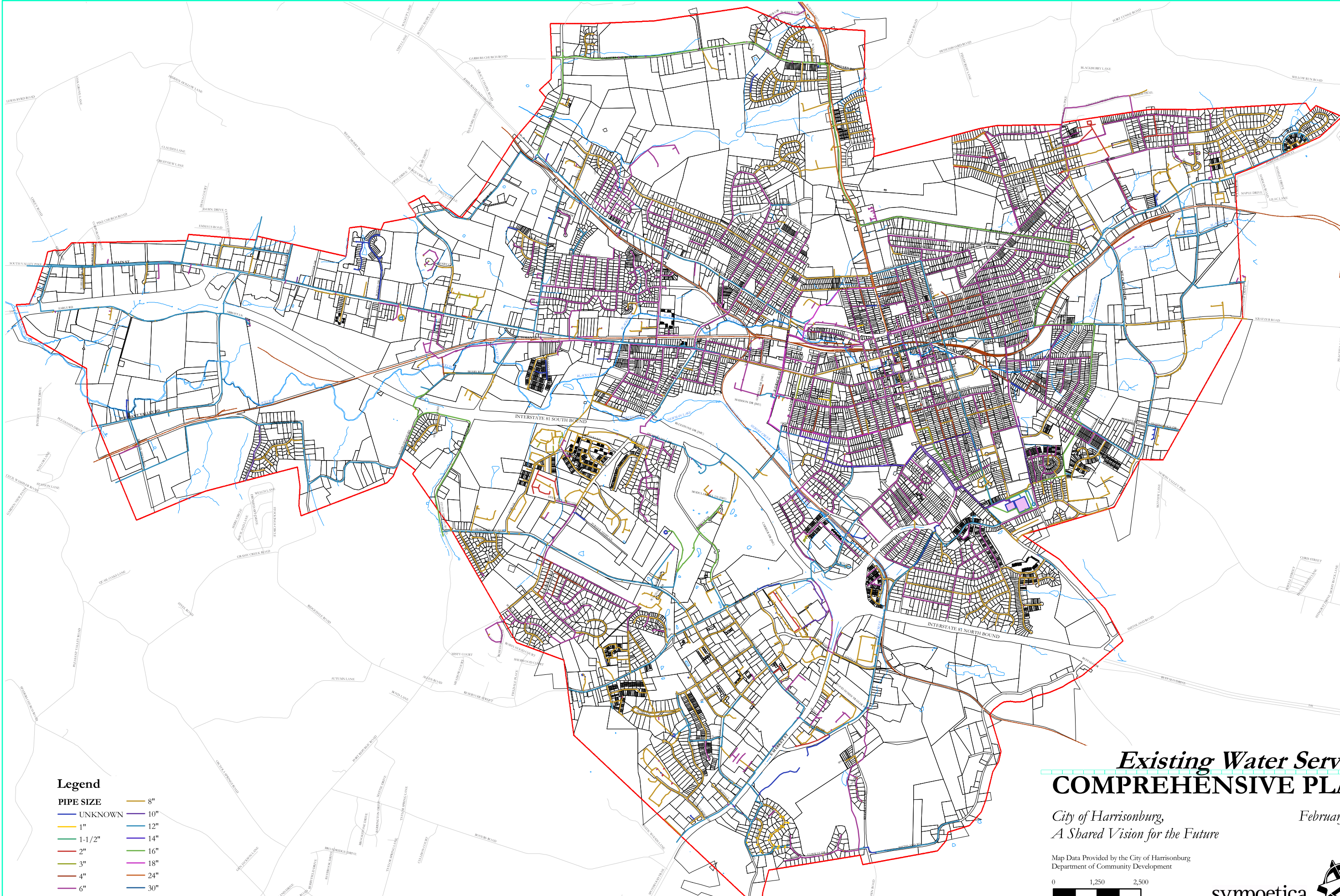
- Strategy 10.4.5 To document all known solid waste disposal facilities in Harrisonburg and maintain archival records of same.
- Objective 10.5 To involve citizens and businesses in the conservation of resources to assist in maintaining cost-effective public service delivery.
  - Strategy 10.5.1 To review the potential for voluntary citizen and business involvement in public service delivery in such areas as recycling, water conservation, storm water pollution reduction, neighborhood watch, rescue squad participation, emergency preparedness.
  - Strategy 10.5.2 To develop programs to recruit and manage citizen and business volunteers in community service.
- Objective 10.6 To monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery so that changes can be made as needed.
  - Strategy 10.6.1 To perform periodic studies of the adequacy, quality and efficiency of city service delivery, including potential needs for: additional water supply sources, water and wastewater treatment expansions, new or expanded landfill space, expanded recycling options, and resource recovery plant efficiency.
- Goal 11. To ensure the public safety and encourage the provision of excellent health services for all people.
  - Objective 11.1 To coordinate and plan for increased emergency preparedness in the face of new national threats.
    - Strategy 11.1.1 In cooperation with federal, state, other local law enforcement and emergency preparedness agencies, and Rockingham Memorial Hospital, provide for continual maintenance and updating of the city's local Emergency Operations Plan.
  - Objective 11.2 To assist local health organizations and groups in efforts to achieve the Healthy People 2010 Goals, a program of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services.
    - Strategy 11.2.1 To cooperate with health providers and groups in hosting events to promote healthy life-styles and provide information about community health services (e.g., health fairs, fitness walks and runs, healthy lifestyles promotional campaigns, etc.)

Objective 11.3      To support the city police and fire departments and the volunteer rescue squad with well located and designed facilities that support their missions.

Strategy 11.3.1    To provide a new police substation in the northwest quadrant of the city.

Strategy 11.3.2    To provide a new fire station in the northwest quadrant of the city.





- Legend**
- PIPE SIZE**
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|---------|-----|
| 8"      | 10" |
| UNKNOWN | 12" |
| 1"      | 14" |
| 1-1/2"  | 16" |
| 2"      | 18" |
| 3"      | 24" |
| 4"      | 30" |
| 6"      |     |

# *Existing Water Service* **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

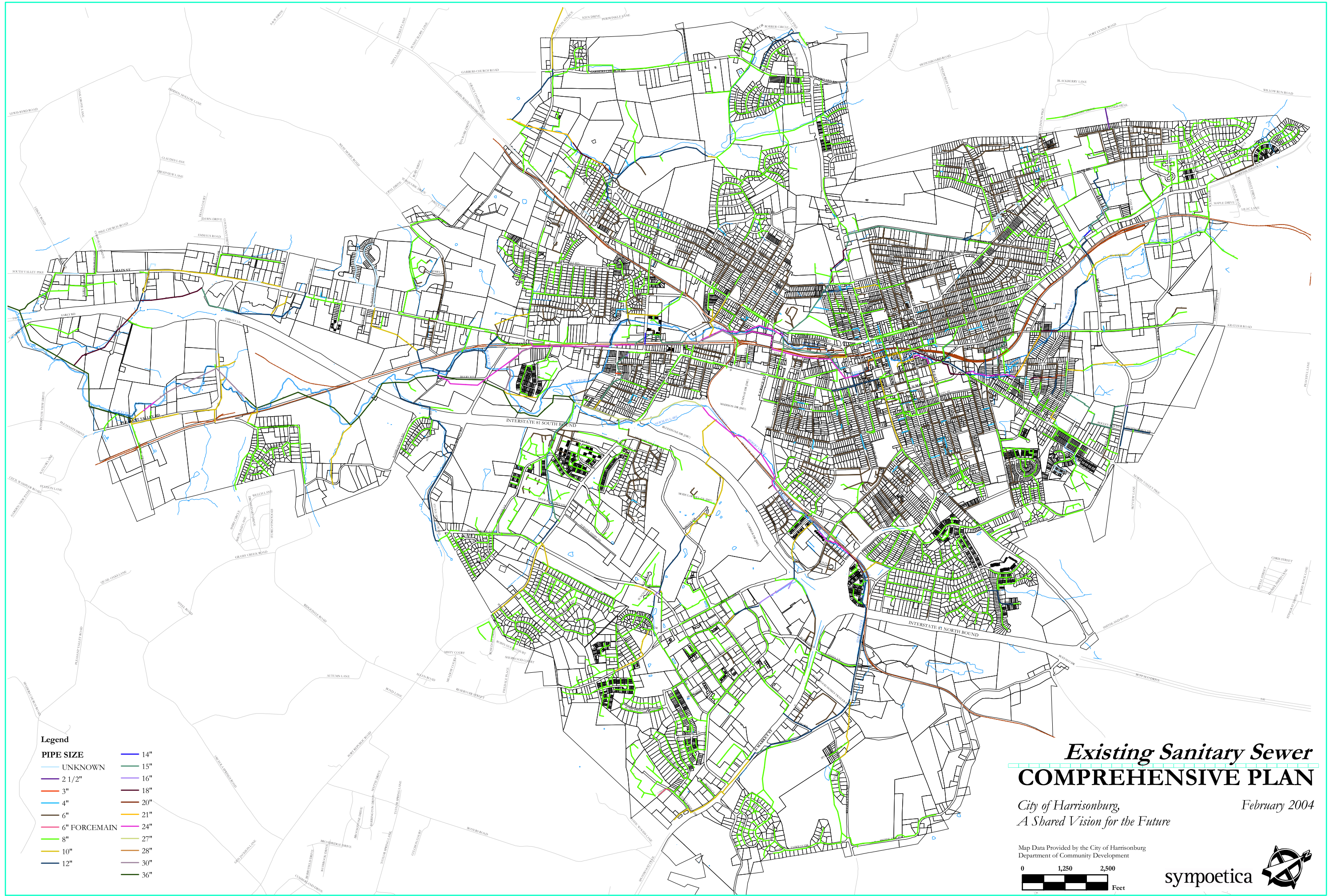
*City of Harrisonburg,*  
*A Shared Vision for the Future*

February 2004

Map Data Provided by the City of Harrisonburg  
Department of Community Development







**Legend**

**PIPE SIZE**

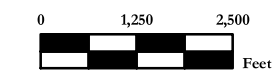
- |              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| UNKNOWN      | 14" |
| 2 1/2"       | 15" |
| 3"           | 16" |
| 4"           | 18" |
| 6"           | 20" |
| 6" FORCEMAIN | 21" |
| 8"           | 24" |
| 10"          | 27" |
| 12"          | 28" |
|              | 30" |
|              | 36" |

# *Existing Sanitary Sewer* **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

*City of Harrisonburg,  
A Shared Vision for the Future*

*February 2004*

Map Data Provided by the City of Harrisonburg  
Department of Community Development



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## Chapter 13      Economic Development & Tourism

### Introduction

The City of Harrisonburg expresses its concern for the economic health of the community through its economic development and tourism programs. The promotion of business and industrial investment and jobs retention and creation supports the city's tax base, increases property values, provides work opportunities for the citizens, helps reduce poverty and moves the city toward economic stability and self-sufficiency. This chapter focuses on Harrisonburg's economic health and the efforts to maintain and enhance it through economic development and tourism promotion.

### Background

As part of the update to the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee collected key economic data to provide a snapshot of existing economic conditions in the city. The resultant memorandum is included in the Plan Background Information Supplement and is summarized here. It describes the overall character of employment, income, the commercial, retail, and industrial real estate markets, and tourism in Harrisonburg.

#### Economic Conditions

**Labor:** Harrisonburg has a diverse employment base. The city is primarily supported by non-agricultural employment in the form of manufacturing, trade, tourism, retail trade, and professional services. Consistent with national trends, Harrisonburg saw substantial growth in Services and Retail Trade employment between 1991 and 2001. The largest growth (7.3 percent), however, was in the Transportation, Communications, and Utilities sector, which includes establishments in transportation, communication, gas, and electric services. According to Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) projections for the Northwest Region of Virginia, this industry is projected to be among the fastest growing, along with Retail Trade, Services, and Construction, through 2008.

Harrisonburg enjoyed substantial growth in manufacturing employment (6.8 percent) in the last decade, whereas most areas in the country, and particularly on the East Coast, suffered major losses in manufacturing. With the exception of the 2.3 percent decrease in federal government employment, the largest decrease in Harrisonburg was in agriculture. It is important to note this category is comprised of farming, ranching, forestry, and fishing establishments, and that many of Harrisonburg's agriculture-related jobs (e.g., those in food processing, equipment manufacturing, feed production) are classified as manufacturing employment.

The city had extremely low unemployment at 1.1 percent in February 2003. This may be a challenge when recruiting new businesses to the area due to wage rate competition with other areas in the Commonwealth. Table 13-1 shows Harrisonburg's unemployment rate compared to that of Rockingham County, the Central Shenandoah Planning District, and Virginia.

**Table 13-1. Labor and Unemployment Levels in 1990 and 2000**

	<b>Virginia</b>	<b>CSPDC</b>	<b>Rockingham County</b>	<b>Harrisonburg</b>
<b>1990</b>				
Total Labor Force	3,196,000	118,230	35,706	16,141
Number of Unemployed	136,000	5,475	1,650	693
Number of Workers Employed	3,060,000	112,755	34,056	15,448
Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.6%	4.6%	4.3%
<b>2000</b>				
Total Labor Force	3,609,703	129,569	37,644	18,758
Number of Unemployed	79,801	1,927	349	202
Number of Workers Employed	3,529,902	127,642	37,295	18,556
Unemployment Rate	2.2%	1.5%	0.9%	1.1%

Source: Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, Economics Research Associates, February 2003

**Income Trends:** Harrisonburg's 2001 average weekly wage (\$506) was well under the state average (\$698) across all industries. However, the city's wage figures were about the same as those for the Central Shenandoah Planning District (\$509 average weekly wage) and those in Rockingham County (also \$509 average weekly wage). The highest paid trades in the city are Manufacturing (\$632), Transportation, Telecommunications, and Utilities (\$674), Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (\$656) and Federal Government (\$866). The sectors with the lowest average weekly wages were Agriculture (\$390), Trade (\$354) and Retail Trade (\$301).

Comparing the median Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) in Harrisonburg to that of Virginia and Rockingham County, the 1991-2001 trend shows increases in the city, county, and state medians of 36, 42, and 48 percent, respectively. This trend further expands the gap between Harrisonburg and Virginia median AGIs (from 15 percent higher than the city to 25 percent higher) and closes the gap between Harrisonburg and Rockingham County median AGIs (from 6 percent lower than the city to 1.5 percent lower). The AGI gap between Harrisonburg and Rockingham County is expected to continue to close as higher income households are drawn to the higher valued single family homes being built in the county.

**Table 13-2. Income Trends, 1991 and 2001**

	<b>Virginia</b>	<b>CSPDC</b>	<b>Rockingham County</b>	<b>Harrisonburg</b>
<b>1991</b>				
Average Weekly Wage	\$ 451	\$ 374	\$ 380	\$ 365
Median Adjusted Gross Income	\$ 38,277	N/A	\$ 31,471	\$ 33,353
<b>2001</b>				
Average Weekly Wage	\$ 698	\$ 509	\$ 509	\$ 506
Median Adjusted Gross Income	\$ 56,530	N/A	\$ 44,622	\$ 45,282

Source: Central Shenandoah PDC, Economics Research Associates, February 2003

**Business Investment:** Harrisonburg’s active manufacturing businesses and their products are listed in Table 13-3. Note that this list does not include as many poultry processing industries as in previous years. Discussions with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership indicated that recent layoffs and business closures in the local poultry industry are due to a number of factors. Closures of companies like Pilgrim’s Pride and Shenandoah Manufacturing are primarily due to buy-outs of small, family-owned businesses by large corporations and are part of a national consolidation trend in the industry. The Virginia poultry industry has also suffered significant setbacks due to an attack of avian flu in 2002. The economic impact of the illness is estimated at \$130 million in cumulative losses to Virginia businesses. Regional, local, and industry leaders are monitoring these trends very closely and are looking for all available technological options to help safeguard the industry.

**Table 13-3. Manufacturing Businesses and Products in Harrisonburg, 2003**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Products</b>
Banta Company	Adhesive-Bond Soft Cover Books
CCL Container, Inc.	Aluminum & Plastic tubing
Cargill, Inc.	Poultry Feeds
Christian Light Publications, Inc.	Book Publishing
Color Graphics Corporation	Offset Printing
Comsonics, Inc.	Cable TV Equipment
Daniel’s	Printing & Advertising
Edwards, Eddie Signs, Inc.	Sign Production
Excel Steel Works, Inc.	Sheet Metal
Frazier Quarry, Inc.	Crushed Stone
Friendship Industries, Inc.	Packaging & Mailing Services
Georges, Inc.	Poultry Processing
Glass & Metals, LLC	Storefronts
Owens-Brockway	Plastic Bottles
Power Monitors, Inc.	Electronic Measurement Equipment
Reddy Ice	Ice Manufacturing
Rockingham Co-Op Farm Bureau	Prepared Feeds
Shenandoah Engineering Services, Inc.	Control Panels for Manufacturing Equipment
Skyline Building Systems	Wooden Roof Trusses
Southern States Cooperative, Inc.	Prepared Feeds
Superior Concrete, Inc. (HQ)	Ready-Mix Concrete
Suter’s Handcrafted Furniture	Handcrafted Furniture
Tyson Foods, Inc.	Poultry Processing
Valley Blox, Inc.	Precast Concrete & Building Components
Walker Manufacturing, Company	Exhaust Systems

**New Investment:** Table 13-4 shows recent “success stories” in Harrisonburg economic development.

**Table 13-4. Investment Activity, 2001 – 2002, Harrisonburg**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Investment Activity</b>		
	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
AIG Baker	\$ 40,000,000	500,000	N/A
CCL Container	\$ 5,500,000	50,000	48
SEI Technology, Inc.	N/A	N/A	50
Valley Mall (Belk)	\$ 4,000,000	N/A	30
Baxter Healthcare	\$ 1,600,000	13,000	50

**Taxable Sales:** Detailed figures on taxable sales for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County are provided in the Economic Conditions Memo in the Plan Background Information Supplement. These figures show that from 1993 through 2001 total taxable sales in the city increased by 38%. By 2001, sales had grown to \$582,772,000. In 2001, taxable sales in Rockingham County were \$239,418,000, significantly lower. Yet, this represents a 103% increase in taxable sales from 1993.

Harrisonburg is losing market share to the county, but this loss is not as marked as might have been expected. In most parts of Virginia and the country, the loss of market share of older cities to outlying areas of surrounding counties has been much more significant. Harrisonburg has managed to maintain its position as the commercial and retail hub of the region, accounting for 68 percent of total city and county sales for the last full year of sales data (2001).

**Real Estate:** Limited vacancies in the city's industrial inventory are a clear challenge to business development and recruitment efforts in Harrisonburg. The Pilgrim's Pride, Shenandoah Manufacturing, and Tyco Electronics facilities represent the bulk of available industrial space at approximately 320,000 square feet of vacant space. These properties are being considered for conversion to multi-tenant uses, but may need significant retrofitting due to the nature of previous operations.

The limited availability of M-1 land, particularly of parcels larger than 30 acres, may also be an obstacle to business recruitment efforts. Additionally, some existing business owners believe the natural gas infrastructure needs major upgrades. Columbia Gas of Virginia, a subsidiary of NiSource, serves the area. Harrisonburg is on the end of their service line and curtailments are a frequent occurrence when temperatures drop below freezing.

Information gathered on the retail market came mostly from interviews conducted with commercial real estate agents and secondary sources such as the National Research Bureau Shopping Center Directory, and as such, is largely anecdotal. Key areas of concern in 2003 uncovered by the research include:

- Vacancies created by grocery store closures: at least 2 vacant grocery stores (Farmer Jack's at Cloverleaf and Dukes Plaza)
- Vacancies created by Harrisonburg Crossing: The Wal-Mart adjacent to Valley Mall closed with the opening of new Wal-Mart here; Circuit City and Staples also relocated to Harrisonburg Crossing, leaving their existing spaces on E. Market Street vacant.

## Tourism

**Overview:** The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau (H-R/CVB) is the umbrella tourism promotion agency for the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. The H-R/CVB receives funding from both the city and the county. It does not receive a direct allocation from the city's meals and lodging tax. H-R/CVB is a non-profit membership group that charges annual membership fees and uses those funds for advertising. Its mission is:

“to serve as the fullest possible provider of information to the public, with the intention to increase tourism in [the] region by providing ever-changing information, giving businesses the opportunity to grow economically, and to enhance the quality of life for [the] local community.”

Specific goals developed include:

- To build a distinct presence in the tourism marketplace by establishing a recognizable and easily marketable "brand"
- To develop motor coach tourism
- To position Harrisonburg as a small meetings and conference destination

**Branding Strategy:** The H-R/CVB hired an advertising agency that specializes in tourism promotion to assist in the creation of its branding strategy. In marketing to individuals, the board of directors has decided to position Harrisonburg-Rockingham County as an outdoor recreation hub, touting nearby biking, hiking, canoeing, and many other options, including Massanutten Resort and the Civil War battlefields. The branding strategy will culminate in the creation of new travel magazine advertising, brochure, rack card (for major market distribution) and small meeting and conference planning materials.

H-R/CVB expects Civil war related tourism to increase in the valley and at two near-by Civil War Battlefields in Rockingham County, Cross Keys and Port Republic Battlefields. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation has just begun an extensive marketing campaign, and plans are under way to create a visitor orientation center in the Rockingham/Harrisonburg area with the cooperation of the H-R/CVB.

**Motor Coach Tourism:** The H-R/CVB has partnered with local attractions and dining, entertainment and lodging companies to create Shenandoah Adventures, a partnership dedicated to providing receptive tour services to the motor coach industry. The surprising success of the Virginia Quilt Museum, located in downtown Harrisonburg, has made it the focal point for efforts to attract bus tours to the area. Shenandoah Adventure package tours include visits to the Quilt Museum, the only quilting museum in Virginia, and the Mennonite areas and historical sites in Rockingham County. Funding for Shenandoah Adventures comes both from the partners and from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

**Meetings and Conferences:** Harrisonburg/Rockingham County currently has capacity for hosting events for up to 250 attendees. JMU has built a conference facility on its College of Integrated Science and Technology (CISAT) campus with a capacity of 500, but first priority use

is for student and university functions. The H-R/CVB may pursue the concept of a downtown conference facility, pending an evaluation of feasibility considering existing plans for a Staunton conference center and hotel; unmet demand for University events; and unmet demand for wedding and reception space.

### Economic Development

The stated mission of the city's Department of Economic Development is "to increase the number of higher-paying job opportunities available in Harrisonburg by attracting new businesses to this community and assisting existing firms to expand locally."

To that end, the department has set the following goals and underlying strategic objectives.

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Goal:      | Increase technology-related job opportunities in the city  |
| Objective: | Attract expansion investments from Washington, DC metro area information technology and/or telecommunication firms   |
| Goal:      | Attract jobs that pay above-average wages  |
| Objective: | Assist in the attraction and creation of jobs in Harrisonburg that pay greater than \$11.60 per hour (the city's average weekly wage in 1998)  |
| Goal:      | Attract capital-intensive operations to the city   |
| Objective: | Increase the machinery and tools tax base located within city limits   |
| Goal:      | Improve the overall business climate within the city   |
| Objective: | Strive to make Harrisonburg the best place in Virginia in which to operate a business  |
| Goal:      | Pursue regional cooperation in economic development efforts  |
| Objective: | Work in cooperation with other Shenandoah Valley jurisdictions to market the Valley as a strong business region. By pooling marketing resources, the goal is to increase the number of business prospects in the pipeline. |

Financing options are available to existing and prospective Harrisonburg firms through:

- Harrisonburg Industrial Development Authority (IDA) – a 7-member board authorized to issue bonds for up to 100 percent of project cost for manufacturing operations.
- Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) – a 5-member board authorized to finance projects in the central business district of downtown Harrisonburg.
- Virginia Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) – provides fixed-asset financing to new and expanding manufacturing and other companies that a) create new jobs or save at-risk jobs and b) sell 50 percent or more of their products outside of Virginia. Funds can be used for acquisition of land and buildings, construction or improvements to facilities, and the purchase of machinery and equipment. Loans are limited to \$1,000,000 or 40% of the total project cost, whichever is less.
- Virginia Small Business Financing Authority Loan Guaranty Program – guarantees up to (the lesser of) \$300,000 or 75 percent of a bank loan to qualified small businesses. The program

can provide a guaranty for a short-term line of credit or a term loan of up to three years in duration.

**Harrisonburg Technology Park:** The city developed Harrisonburg Technology Park to attract and encourage the development of technology-related businesses. The park is one of only 13 Virginia Technology Zones, a designation that allows the city to provide incentives to targeted businesses for up to 10 years. The Harrisonburg incentive package includes a three-year exemption from business, professional and occupational license taxes and fees, exemption from water and sewer availability and connection fees, and below-market land prices.

**Shenandoah Valley Partnership:** The Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) is a regional partnership that addresses economic development in the central Shenandoah Valley region. The Partnership includes the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton and Waynesboro, and the counties of Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham. James Madison University plays a particularly active role in the Partnership and provides it on-campus office space.

The Partnership's Board of Directors is made up of approximately 20 members, split evenly among public and private sector interests. The Executive Committee of the Board provides management of regional activities and offers direction to the Shenandoah Valley Partnership's Executive Director. The SVP recently adopted a new development plan to reflect emphasis on three key areas: marketing, workforce development, and advocacy.

**Shenandoah Valley Technology Council:** The Shenandoah Valley Technology Council (SVTC) was established in 1997 through a grant written by the office of Research and Program Innovation at James Madison University. The SVTC provides informational programs and networking opportunities to its 80 members, which include business, government, and education leaders. Standing committees include Planning and Operations, Regional Technology Workforce Development, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship.

**Downtown Renaissance Initiative:** The Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance was organized by City Council in April 2002. This economic development effort is described in Chapter 14, Revitalization.

## **Economic Development & Tourism Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 12. To retain and enhance the city's role as the economic and tourism hub of the region offering a variety of jobs in those sectors that enhance the city's ability to expand its economic base.

Objective 12.1 To increase the number of higher-paying jobs available in Harrisonburg by attracting new businesses and assisting existing firms to expand locally.

Strategy 12.1.1 To monitor wage levels locally, regionally and in the state so as to determine wage goals.

- Strategy 12.1.2 To continue to recruit new businesses and promote the expansion of existing business that offer full-time permanent jobs paying above the city's current average weekly wage or above a higher wage goal as wage studies suggest.
- Strategy 12.1.3 To continue to assist businesses in taking advantage of financing options available from the Harrisonburg Industrial development Authority, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Virginia Economic Development Loan Fund, and the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority Loan Guaranty Program.
- Strategy 12.1.4 To continue the technology business incentive package offered in the Harrisonburg Technology Park.
- Strategy 12.1.5 To make businesses aware through focused outreach of the business planning assistance available from the James Madison University Small Business Development Center and the Harrisonburg chapter of Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).
- Strategy 12.1.6 To increase living wage job opportunities for all segments of the workforce, including support for the Op Shop.
  
- Objective 12.2 To increase business linkages with James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University.
  - Strategy 12.2.1 To continue and expand cooperative efforts between the city and the universities to promote new businesses that capitalize on university resources and the graduate employment pool. For example, the city and universities could hold annual summits to explore ways to expand business and job opportunities. Such summits should involve university business program faculty and staff, current students, and graduates.
  - Strategy 12.2.2 To involve James Madison University in efforts to revitalize downtown. An example of such involvement might include the expansion of cultural offerings through the planned Cultural Arts campus.
  
- Objective 12.3 To work with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council on regional economic development initiatives.
  - Strategy 12.3.1 To increase participation and investment in the Shenandoah Valley Partnership from both the public and private sectors including new businesses and industries.
  - Strategy 12.3.2 To participate actively in the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council so as to keep abreast of technology trends and support the infrastructure necessary to attract high-tech businesses.



- Objective 12.4     To build a distinct presence in the tourism marketplace and use this distinctiveness to increase tourism in Harrisonburg.
- Strategy 12.4.1     To establish a recognizable and easily marketable “brand” for the Harrisonburg-Rockingham region and to market that brand through travel magazine advertising, brochures, rack cards, and small meeting and conference planning materials.
- Strategy 12.4.2     To establish the Cross Keys / Port Republic Battlefields Civil War orientation center in Harrisonburg and to consider the Hardesty-Higgins visitors center as the location.
- Strategy 12.4.3     To partner with local attractions and dining, entertainment and lodging companies to create Shenandoah Adventures, an initiative to attract motor coach tourism.
- Strategy 12.4.4     To encourage the development of expanded conference and meeting facilities in the city.
- Strategy 12.4.5     To support the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau in implementing these strategies.

## Chapter 14      Revitalization

### Introduction

Cities, and areas within cities, often go through periods of community and economic health as well as periods of stress. Virtually all cities have areas within them that at some time are in need of rehabilitation and revitalization. The City of Harrisonburg has identified a number of areas of the city where revitalization strategies should be applied. The goal is to help these areas return to their original prosperity, attractiveness, and function so that they again become assets to the community and meet the needs of businesses and/or residents.

### Background

#### Downtown

Downtown Harrisonburg was once the economic center of the city and the region, but has been overshadowed by new commercial and business areas. The city has made steps toward revitalizing its downtown, recognizing that a vital city center attracts business, tourists, and improves the overall quality of life for residents. To that end, Harrisonburg offers tax incentives to downtown property owners, has created the Arts and Cultural District and has provided support for Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance, a new non-profit organization seeking revitalization of downtown.

**Central Business District Tax Incentive:** The city has established tax incentives to encourage the renovation and/or rehabilitation of older structures downtown. The incentive is offered to owners of B-1 zoned (Central Business District) commercial and residential real estate that is at least 25 years old. It provides partial exemption of real estate taxes, not to exceed the amount of the increase in assessed value due to the renovation, for up to five years.

**Arts and Cultural District:** The ordinance establishing the Arts and Cultural District was adopted in 2001. The district is comprised of the B-1 (Central Business District), parts of B-2 (General Business District) adjacent to B-1, and James Madison University's main campus. The city's stated goal in creating the district is "to improve the economic conditions of the central portion of the city which could, in turn, benefit the welfare of the citizens of Harrisonburg." The district offers qualified arts organizations exemption from business, professional, and occupational license taxes and fees for three years. In addition, organizations are exempt from admission taxes and can qualify for the Central Business District tax incentive described above.

**Downtown Renaissance Initiative:** Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance grew out of an effort initiated by City Council in April 2002 to evaluate a proposal to create a pedestrian mall in downtown Harrisonburg. Its mission has since broadened in scope, and is to "work in partnership with city government and the community to develop a comprehensive vision and master plan to revitalize downtown Harrisonburg into a prosperous and vibrant city center." Its board of directors and advisory board include representatives of the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Citizens for Downtown, Eastern Mennonite

University, James Madison University, Arts Council of the Valley, as well as individual property owners, architects, and bankers.

The Downtown Renaissance board of directors has laid out the following organizational objectives:

- **Economic:** To strengthen the downtown district's existing economic base, seek ways to introduce new types of commerce suitable for a downtown venue, and convert underutilized space into productive uses.
- **Design:** To promote the enhanced physical appearance of the district by capitalizing on its assets, rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction and beautifying the streetscape.
- **Promotion:** To market the downtown districts unique qualities to potential customers, investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors through effective strategies and special events.
- **Organization:** To build cooperation and consensus between all stakeholders in an effort to meet our mission and objectives, to strengthen our Main Street program, and to improve the quality of life for the people who live, work and visit downtown Harrisonburg.

Harrisonburg applied for and became an affiliate member of the Virginia Main Street program in 2003 and will use the resources of that program to further the goals of Downtown Renaissance and the revitalization goal, objectives and strategies of this comprehensive plan. Included in the latter is the development of a downtown revitalization plan. This plan could address a wide range of issues, among them the following:

- Recommended changes in land use
- The appropriate density and intensity of downtown development and redevelopment
- Incentives to rehabilitate existing quality buildings
- Design guidelines addressing such issues as building height, setback, orientation, façade treatment, commercial signage, etc.
- Parking needs and standards for the location and design of parking lots
- Needed transportation improvements, including roads, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails, transit stops, etc.
- Streetscape improvements, including signage, lighting, street trees, landscaping, paving materials, and street furniture.

#### Edom Road Revitalization Area

The city staff and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee have identified several blocks around Edom Road, as shown on the Plan Framework Map, as an area in need of revitalization. Located next to downtown, this area currently exhibits low quality and deteriorating building stock and conflicting land uses. The goal is to encourage reinvestment and to seek coordinated redevelopment of the area transforming it into an attractive and vital city asset. The revitalization plan for this area should consider such issues as the following:

- Quality of building stock
- Number of vacancies

- Presence of historic and environmental resources
- Economic viability of businesses
- Parcels where redevelopment is recommended
- Appropriate land uses and zoning
- Redevelopment and building rehabilitation incentives
- Needed public investments (roads, sidewalks, streetscape, infrastructure)

### Older Shopping Centers

The City of Harrisonburg is experiencing a phenomenon in the retail sector that is being felt in communities all across the nation, that is, the overbuilding of retail space. New shopping centers add few new retail businesses to the local market, instead drawing existing businesses to new quarters. The result is high vacancies in older shopping centers as retailers move to the new ones. In some cases, the new shopping centers add new businesses, but the competition created causes older retailers to go out of business. Harrisonburg has experienced both these phenomena recently. Examples of vacancies created include the following:

- Vacancies created by Harrisonburg Crossing: The Wal-Mart adjacent to Valley Mall closed with the opening of new Wal-Mart here; Circuit City and Staples also relocated to Harrisonburg Crossing, leaving their existing spaces on E. Market Street vacant.
- Vacancies created by grocery store closures: at least 2 vacant grocery stores (Farmer Jack's at Cloverleaf and Dukes Plaza)

A study of the city's retail sector is in order to determine whether this is a trend for the future or a momentary restructuring of the retail market. This study would inform the Planning Commission and City Council as to the impact of their commercial rezoning decisions on future retail vacancies. At the same time, it would help determine whether some older shopping centers should be the focus of retail revitalization efforts or should be replanned for alternative uses.

### Neighborhood Conservation Areas

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee has identified a number of neighborhoods around the edges of downtown as experiencing stress. These neighborhoods are highlighted on the Plan Framework Map. Some are suffering from poorly maintained, deteriorating, or vacant homes and spot conversions of single family homes to apartments, often for students. Other areas contain older deteriorating apartment buildings. Some are affected by encroaching commercial development or inappropriate conversion of houses to non-residential uses. Impacts of traffic on highly traveled roadways may also be creating neighborhood stress. This plan recommends that for each of these areas a community-based neighborhood plan be developed to address these and other issues raised by the community. Such plans might include:

- Programs to encourage the rehabilitation and renovation of older houses;
- Programs to facilitate home ownership and improve the quality of rental housing;
- Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of variances and conditional use permits needed to build and renovate older homes on small lots;

- Strategies to reduce land use conflicts, including conflicts between residential areas and adjacent commercial or industrial areas and conflicts created by the expansion of public and institutional uses within neighborhoods;
- Programs to reduce pressures to convert single family houses and lots to other uses;
- Traffic impacts analyses addressing commuter traffic on major through roads and industrial truck traffic;
- Recommended infrastructure improvements, including street and sidewalk repairs, traffic calming measures, new sidewalks and trails, upgraded water and sewer lines;
- Other public investments, such as street tree planting, pocket parks, and community centers;
- Resolution of safety and security issues;
- Programs to encourage the involvement of neighborhood residents in the improvement and maintenance of their neighborhoods (building leadership capacity, encouraging civic involvement); and
- Standards for public landscaping, streets, and utilities in the historic districts to enhance their distinctive design.

### **Revitalization Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 13. To enhance and revitalize existing residential and commercial areas.

Objective 13.1 To make downtown revitalization a major, high priority public/private initiative, the cornerstone of the city's economic development, tourism, historic preservation, and civic pride enhancement efforts.

Strategy 13.1.1 To support the initiatives of Downtown Renaissance in such areas as:

- Creating a permanent, well funded downtown revitalization organization
- Developing design guidelines and design enhancement projects
- Seeking historic district designation for the Court Square area
- Marketing and promoting downtown businesses, restaurants and retailers
- Promoting the Arts and Cultural District and encouraging the location of museums and other cultural facilities downtown
- Strengthening downtown's economic base as a regional destination
- Making downtown the focal point for community and regional events.

Strategy 13.1.2 To develop with Downtown Renaissance a downtown revitalization plan to guide the rehabilitation and development of the area. This plan should address the following:

- Recommended changes in land use
- The appropriate density and intensity of downtown development and redevelopment
- Incentives to rehabilitate existing quality buildings
- Design guidelines addressing such issues as building height, setback, orientation, façade treatment, commercial signage, etc.

- Parking needs and standards for the location and design of parking lots
  - Needed transportation improvements, including roads, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails, transit stops, etc.
  - Streetscape improvements, including signage, lighting, street trees, landscaping, paving materials, and street furniture.
- Strategy 13.1.3 To promote and create incentives for development of new housing downtown in accordance with the downtown revitalization plan.
- Strategy 13.1.4 To seek designation of Harrisonburg as a full-member Virginia Main Street Community.
- Strategy 13.1.5 To prepare a redevelopment and revitalization plan for the Edom Road Revitalization Area, which is located adjacent to downtown.
  
- Objective 13.2 To examine the extent to which changes in the retail sector are related to retail growth versus retail relocation, to seek to minimize long-term retail vacancies, and to initiate programs to redevelop and revitalize abandoned older retail areas.
  - Strategy 13.2.1 To understand and monitor trends and conditions in the local and regional retail market.
  - Strategy 13.2.2 To consider the impacts of new retail commercial rezonings on the current retail supply and demand.
  - Strategy 13.2.3 To actively market older shopping centers with high vacancies including consideration of conversion to other uses.
  
- Objective 13.3 To identify neighborhoods under stress and seek to stabilize, improve the maintenance of, and revitalize these neighborhoods.
  - Strategy 13.3.1 To prepare community-based neighborhood plans for neighborhood conservation areas identified on the Plan Framework Map. Such plans might include:
    - Programs to encourage quality rehabilitation and renovation of older houses;
    - Programs to facilitate home ownership and improve the quality of rental housing;
    - Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of variances and conditional use permits needed to build and renovate older homes on small lots;
    - Strategies to reduce land use conflicts, including conflicts between residential areas and adjacent commercial or industrial areas and conflicts created by the expansion of public and institutional uses within neighborhoods;
    - Tools to assure compliance with zoning and property maintenance codes, particularly for residential rental units;
    - Programs to reduce pressures to convert single family houses and lots to inappropriate other uses;

- Traffic impacts analyses addressing commuter traffic on major through roads and industrial truck traffic;
- Recommended infrastructure improvements, including street and sidewalk repairs, traffic calming measures, new sidewalks and trails, upgraded water and sewer lines;
- Other public investments, such as street tree planting, pocket parks, and community centers;
- Resolution of safety and security issues;
- Programs to encourage the involvement of neighborhood residents in the improvement and maintenance of their neighborhoods (building leadership capacity, encouraging civic involvement); and
- Standards for public landscape, streets, and utilities in the historic districts to enhance their distinctive design.

Strategy 13.3.2 To utilize the planning process described under Objective 3.1

Strategy 13.3.3 To implement neighborhood conservation area plans.

## **Chapter 15 Community Engagement & Collaboration**

### **Introduction**

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan sets out an agenda for city improvement and progress toward realizing its vision for the future. Many citizens tend to think that the City government alone is responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. However, implementation success will depend greatly on the city government partnering with other governments, institutions, non-profits, civic groups, businesses and residents. Many issues can only be resolved comprehensively and successfully on a regional basis, so collaboration with Rockingham County is essential. Key internal institutions with which the City hopes to collaborate are James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University and Rockingham Memorial Hospital. As the following Goal 14 shows, there are many areas where these institutions can collaborate with the city besides just the areas of education and health.

The vision statement presents a future city that is a great place to live, to raise a family, to work and to prosper. But note that the vision statement also contains another key idea – a city where citizens are inspired to work together. Goal 15 supports efforts to engender civic pride and to encourage all citizens to participate in planning for the city and working toward the vision.

### **Community Engagement & Collaboration Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 14. To coordinate and collaborate with Rockingham County, Rockingham Memorial Hospital, James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University and others to meet these goals.

Objective 14.1 To explore ways that the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County might increase collaboration in the provision of public facilities and services and in other public endeavors.

Strategy 14.1.1 To establish a formal process under which the city and county can discuss and implement coordinated or shared programs in such areas as affordable housing, land use planning, growth and development, transportation, emergency communications system, parks & recreation, greenways, tourism promotion, stormwater management, environmental protection.

Objective 14.2 To coordinate and collaborate with James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University, and Blue Ridge Community College in areas of mutual concern.

Strategy 14.2.1 As described in other objectives and strategies, to establish mechanisms and procedures for coordinating and collaborating with these institutions of higher learning on such issues as campus master planning, provision of student housing, transportation and parking, workforce development, technology business development, lifelong learning opportunities, and arts and culture.



Objective 14.3 To coordinate and collaborate with Rockingham Memorial Hospital, the Central Shenandoah Health District and the Healthy Community Council in responding to community health needs and concerns.

Strategy 14.3.1 To support and coordinate with the health community on such issues as wellness programs, health issue awareness and doctor recruitment.

Goal 15. To engage all citizens to work collaboratively in planning, developing, and promoting the city as a great place.

Objective 15.1 To encourage citizen involvement in city affairs through a multi-venue campaign to promote civic pride and participation.

Strategy 15.1.1 To develop and implement a schedule of civic pride events, such as, city clean-up day, spring flower planting, volunteer recruitment fair, walk or bike to work/school day.

Objective 15.2 To establish procedures for including citizens in planning and plan implementation.

Strategy 15.2.1 To develop and implement a planning approach and process that assures involvement of residents and landowners in preparing the plans for their neighborhoods.

Strategy 15.2.2 To include citizens and the business community in commercial area revitalization planning efforts.

Strategy 15.2.3 To establish a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee for each regular comprehensive plan review and update effort.

Objective 15.3 To reach out to all segments of the population to ensure their participation in planning, developing and promoting the city as a great place.

Strategy 15.3.1 To establish volunteer liaisons between the city and the immigrant communities.

Strategy 15.3.2 To provide signs and brochures in Spanish as much as feasible.

Strategy 15.3.3 To hire multi-lingual staff to the extent feasible.

Strategy 15.3.4 To increase the diversity of the city staff.

Strategy 15.3.5 To provide diversity training for city employees so that they are better equipped to serve all segments of the community.

Strategy 15.3.6 To provide Spanish translators at comprehensive plan public input meetings and to advertise such meetings in the local Spanish language newspaper.

Strategy 15.3.7 To continue to celebrate the city's ethnic communities through events and festivals.

Strategy 15.3.8 To encourage immigrants to learn English.

## **Chapter 16            Implementation**

### **Introduction**

This plan recommends an ambitious array of goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving its vision for the future. The Planning Commission and City Council recognize that not all of these recommendations can be implemented at once. There are limitations of time and money that must be weighed against the desire to accomplish so much. Therefore, this chapter of the plan sets priorities for the strategies that should be undertaken first – in the first five years after adoption of the plan.

This chapter also addresses future amendment of this plan. Circumstances change and opportunities arise. To keep this plan vital and useful, it must be reviewed regularly, and citizens must be involved in those reviews

### **Priority Implementation Strategies for the First Five Years: The 2004 – 2008 Action Plan**

The following implementation strategies have been identified as priorities that should be implemented starting in 2004 and completed by the end of 2008:

- Strategy 1.4.2      To develop a zoning approach to require, permit and/or provide incentives for the development of low density and medium density mixed residential neighborhoods as identified on the Plan Framework Map and Land Use Guide. Ordinance provisions would allow innovative residential building types and permit creative subdivision design solutions that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and protection of historic and environmental resources.
- Strategy 1.6.1      To remove the potential for development or redevelopment of uses incompatible with their surroundings by initiating appropriate rezonings or text amendments as indicated by the Land Use Guide.
- Strategy 3.2.2      To develop a set of policies to limit rezonings and special use permits for conversions of single family homes into duplexes and apartments. Such policies should contain criteria regarding the locations and neighborhood and building conditions that warrant permission of conversion as well as neighborhood plan recommendations regarding conversions to rental housing.
- Strategy 3.3.2      To include in the city's land use codes and manuals design provisions and performance standards to improve the design quality of all residential development.
- Strategy 3.4.2      To review and amend the Zoning Ordinance so as to increase opportunities for single family residential development affordable to households in a range of incomes.
- Strategy 8.4.1      To create a network of green spaces that connects the city's parks with trails and linear open spaces. The Blacks Run Greenway plan describes such a greenway. Similar greenways are recommended along Cooks Creek and along a Norfolk Southern rail line recommended to be abandoned as described under Transportation Strategy 9.2.2.

- Strategy 9.1.4 To expand the City Master Transportation Plan to include design standards for streets that reduce traffic congestion within the transportation system while accommodating all transportation modes. Standards should be included both for streets constructed by the city and those by the private sector.
- Strategy 12.1.2 To continue to recruit new businesses and promote the expansion of existing business that offer full-time permanent jobs paying above the city's current average weekly wage or above a higher wage goal as wage studies suggest.
- Strategy 13.1.1 To support the initiatives of Downtown Renaissance.
- Strategy 13.3.1 To prepare community-based neighborhood plans for neighborhood conservation areas identified on the Plan Framework Map.

### **Revisions to the Priority List of Implementation Strategies in the 2004-2008 Action Plan**

City Council reserves the right to change the priority list as strategies are completed, as circumstances change, and as new opportunities arise. It is difficult to predict the future. As the city pursues a strategy, it may find that upon detailed study, the strategy recommended is not advisable. An alternative strategy to meet the objective and goal may be substituted. In addition, a strategy that seemed important may be reduced in importance because of a change in circumstance. Another strategy may be moved up on the priority list because a new funding source becomes available, an organization or group offers to carry it out, or a strong need arises. The list of priority strategies provided above is flexible and may be changed during the 2004-2008 time frame.

It should also be noted that the inclusion of a strategy in this plan does not guarantee implementation. Council also reserves the right to evaluate the need and cost of implementing a strategy in light of current conditions and priorities as implementation proposals arise.

### **Implementation of Strategies not in the 2004-2008 Action Plan**

The city will implement immediately some objectives and strategies that are not listed in the 2004-2008 Action Plan. These involve on-going activities, mandated activities, or activities already planned in the Capital Improvements Program. An example of an on-going strategy is Strategy 12.3.1 – “To participate actively in the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council so as to keep abreast of technology trends and support the infrastructure to attract high-tech businesses.” Objective 10.3, and all the strategies under it, are required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. This objective responds to the mandate to develop and implement Phase II stormwater management improvements. A planned transportation improvement like the extension of Erickson Avenue from S. High to S. Main Street is an example of a project already included in the Capital Improvements Program.

## **Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan**

This plan should be reviewed again in the 2008-2009 timeframe so that it does not become out of date. Virginia law also mandates such a review. The review may be a complete rewrite of the plan, as was done in 2003, or it may involve just a review and revisions of this plan document. A process to involve the public must be implemented in the 2008-2009 review.

Amendments to this plan may also be needed within the 2004-2008 timeframe. If the Planning Commission and City Council receive a request to approve actions that contradict the Land Use Guide and Master Transportation Plan, amendments to the plan should be considered first. Such amendments could be considered concurrently with a rezoning or other proposal. Public hearings should be held to allow citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments.

## **Monitoring of Implementation**

In the community input meetings held to develop this comprehensive plan, a number of citizens expressed concern about whether the city would implement the plan or leave it to gather dust on the shelf. In order to monitor progress on plan implementation, this plan recommends that the Planning Commission prepare an annual report assessing the progress. The following implementation matrix could be used as a tool to plan the implementation and register progress. The matrix shows each priority strategy and the city agency or other entity to be assigned to work on implementing the strategy. Immediately after plan adoption, the City Manager, Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Planning Commission will develop an implementation schedule and fill in the milestones column of the matrix. In each Planning Commission annual report, the schedule and milestones will be reviewed, as will the list of priority strategies. As described above, it will undoubtedly be necessary to change priorities periodically to keep this plan vital and useful.

**Table 16-1. Implementation Matrix**

<b>Priority Strategy</b>	<b>Location of Strategy in Plan</b>	<b>Assigned Lead Agency</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
Strategy 1.4.2	Page 5-11	Community Development	
Strategy 1.6.1	Page 5-12	Community Development	
Strategy 3.2.2	Page 6-9	Community Development	
Strategy 3.3.2	Page 6-9	Community Development	
Strategy 3.4.2	Page 6-10	Community Development	
Strategy 8.4.1	Page 10-4	Parks & Recreation	
Strategy 9.1.4	Page 11-10	Public Works	
Strategy 12.1.2	Page 13-8	Economic Development	
Strategy 13.1.1	Page 14-4	Downtown Renaissance	
Strategy 13.3.1	Page 14.5	Community Development	

## **Implementation Goal, Objectives and Strategies**

Goal 16. To keep this plan vital and useful by regularly reviewing its recommendations and the progress toward meeting them.

Objective 16.1 To review and update the comprehensive plan at least once every five years.

Strategy 16.1.1 To prepare and implement a schedule for regular plan updates.

Objective 16.2 To prepare an annual report summarizing the progress made toward implementing this comprehensive plan, and in particular the first five years priority action items, and identifying new conditions that might warrant plan amendments.

Strategy 16.2.1 To prepare an annual report and present it to the Planning Commission every September.

Objective 16.3 To use the annual report to reprioritize plan action items in response to new conditions and to initiate plan amendments.

Strategy 16.3.1 To re-establish priorities and develop an annual work plan for the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Planning Commission using the annual report.

Strategy 16.3.2 To revise the plan update schedule as needed based on the annual report.

Objective 16.4 To publicize the process whereby citizens and landowners may propose amendments to the comprehensive plan between five-year plan review efforts.

Strategy 16.4.1 To provide a description of the plan amendment proposal procedure on the city web site.

Strategy 16.4.2 To make available application and hand-out materials for plan amendment proposals.

Strategy 16.4.3 To establish a deadline after which plan amendment proposals will be subsumed in the regular 5-year plan update process.

Objective 16.5 To use the comprehensive plan as a guide in land use and zoning decisions, capital improvements programs, budgeting, and other city actions.

Strategy 16.5.1 To address the conformance of rezonings, special use permits, the CIP, and public facilities improvements with the comprehensive plan in staff reports.

Strategy 16.5.2 To implement a formal process for Planning Commission determination as to whether the general location and extent of each proposed public facility is in substantial accord with the adopted comprehensive plan. (Section 15.2-2232 of the Virginia Code)